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WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

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CITIZEN KABUTO

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RED ALERT 2

AGE OF EMPIRES II:
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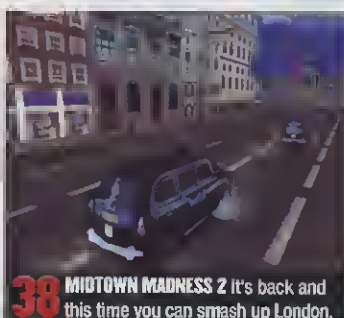
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72 AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE CONQUERORS
Can this expansion take it to the top?



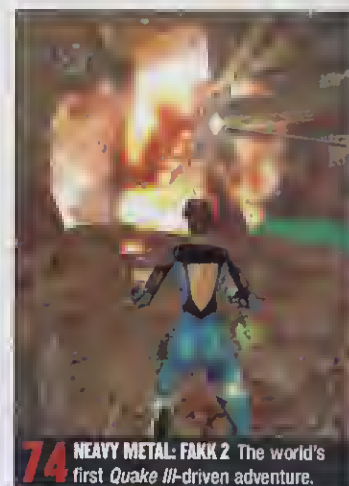
68 C&C: RED ALERT 2 Westwood bounces back to top form with its sequel to one of the world's favourite RTS games. Check out our definitive review.



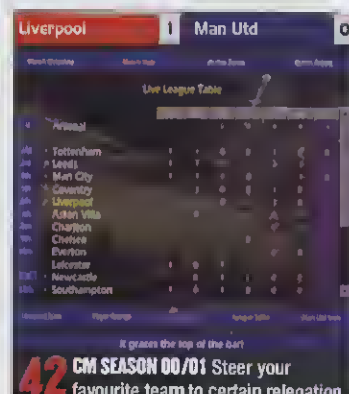
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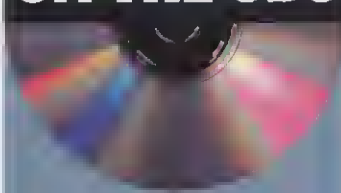
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EXCLUSIVE AND
FULLY PLAYABLE

**AGE OF EMPIRES II:
THE CONQUERORS
EXPANSION**

PLUS

**BLAIR WITCH VOLUME ONE:
THE RUSTIN PARR
INVESTIGATION**
SUDDEN STRIKE UPDATE
STAR TREK NEW WORLDS
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TACTICAL OPS
ROCKET ARENA 3
**DEEP SPACE NINE:
THE FALLEN**
TRAFFIC GIANT
ARABIAN NIGHTS
**TONY HAWK'S PRO
SKATER 2**

AND...

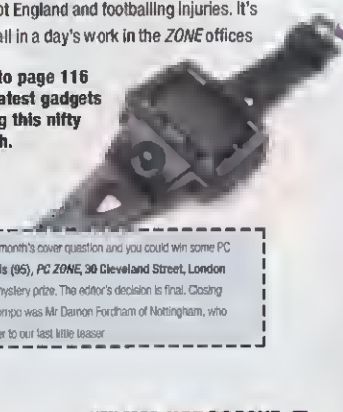
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ENO ZONE

Just when you thought the mag had ended... blimey, a whole lot more!

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including this nifty
PC Watch.



WIN THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win some PC goodies. Send your entry on a postcard addressed to: **The Compo No One Finds (95), PC ZONE, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF**. The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a mystery prize. The editor's decision is final. Closing date: Wednesday October 18 2000. The winner of our September (#93) cover compo was Mr Damon Fordham of Nottingham, who wins something from the ZONE prizes cupboard for sending in the correct answer to our last little teaser

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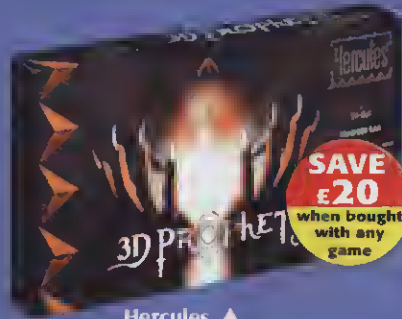
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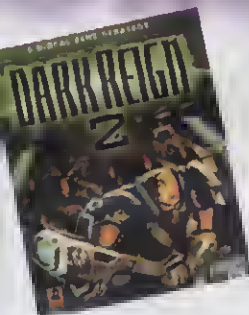


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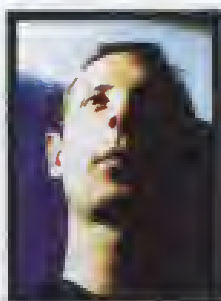
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DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR



The excitement surrounding the imminent arrival of another *Championship Manager* release is evident in the PC ZONE office, and indeed in the pages of this issue. Our full preview (page 42) and interview with the Collyer brothers (page 158) will no doubt raise anticipation for the new version to fever pitch level. At a time when the games industry seems almost exclusively obsessed with delivering games in 3D, the CM series proves that graphically inferior games will always outsell 3D showcases if they can deliver the all-important gameplay. Titles such as *Age Of Empires II* also laugh in the face of their 3D counterparts, with mammoth sales proving Microsoft was right to stick with a

game so rich in quality and depth instead of selling out and turning *AOEII* into a glorious-looking but ultimately shallow gameplay experience. *Planescape: Torment* also proves that rich and engrossing gameplay will always win gamers over, no matter how dated the graphics may seem. Meanwhile, games such as *Ultima Ascension* go out of their way to prove that beautiful game environments mean nothing if you forget to put at least a

reasonable degree of gameplay in there to support the entrancing scenery.

None of this will put an end to the industry's obsession with 3D, though.

The endless stream of first-person

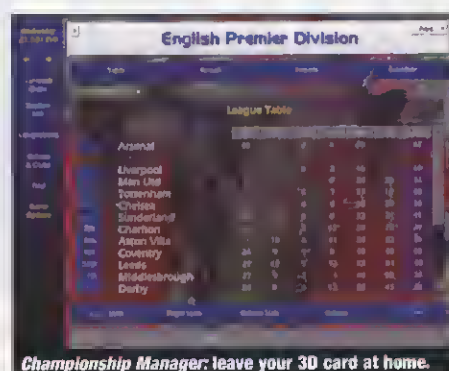
“The endless stream of first-person shoot 'em ups will continue to roll off the games industry conveyor belt with alarming regularity”

shoot 'em ups will continue to roll off the games industry conveyor belt with alarming regularity. 3D strategy games will come and go, and although some will succeed and play as nicely as they look to a large extent (*Ground Control* being a case in point) the majority will never reach the depth of their 2D counterparts. At least, not yet.

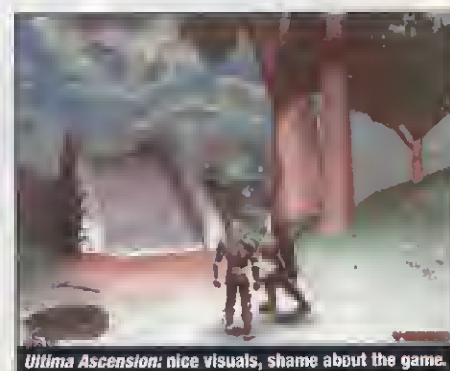
Let's come back to this in a year or two. 3D graphics in PC games may now be the exception rather than the norm, but more often than not this is at the expense of the rich gameplay PC gamers in particular have become accustomed to. The time will come when we will have games as rich in depth as *Planescape: Torment* and with looks to match, but it is not going to happen any time soon. In the meantime, if you get tired of playing games in 3D that look fantastic but seem to end all too soon, you may want to look up some of the 2D classics in our Top 100, many of which will provide you with literally weeks of rich and rewarding gameplay that puts their 3D counterparts to shame.

Best of luck, enjoy the issue.


Chris Anderson,
Editor



Championship Manager: leave your 3D card at home.



Ultima Ascension: nice visuals, shame about the game.



Castle Wolfenstein first appeared in old Commodore 64 platform games. Now things have changed.

WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD CASTLE?

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Gray Matter

PUBLISHER Activision

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Spring 2001

WEBSITE www.activision.com

IN SUMMARY

You play William BJ Blazkowicz, the hardest spy in the US army and the direct precursor to Duke Nukem, sent to stop Himmler's plan of raising an army of undead soldiers. It takes the atmosphere that endeared the original to so many people and adds a 21st-century, *Quake III*-powered gloss, realistic weapons and locations, while promising to deliver an AI worth fighting.


WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

The return of a real heavyweight promises to take first-person shooters back to their roots and revolutionise them in the process. We don't have that many FPS to look forward to, but this and *Duke Nukem Forever* will be battling it out for the awards next year.

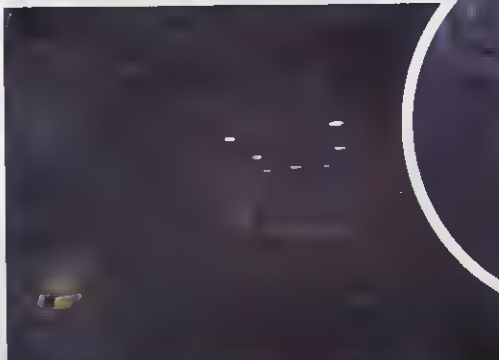
RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

The game that started the whole ball rolling is about to reinvent itself


★ POW Mark Hill




It's filled with a brooding atmosphere; the dark carverous corridors, cobwebby tombs and decaying skeletons.




We've seen the first level running and it looks superb. Think the first 10 minutes of *Saving Private Ryan*, with you in control.



The environment is so interactive you can pick up furniture and throw it at people.



It seems strange that you'd want to return since the whole point of the original was to get out.



The enemies will be respawning. A step back?

There was a time when people's idea of a first-person game was one that started every sentence with 'I', when *Quake* was just an earth tremor and *Doom* was just a sense that came over you when you listened to The Smiths. There was a time when all id meant to anybody was an unconscious part of the psyche where all the primitive incestuous drives lay hidden. Then *Wolfenstein 3D* appeared sometime in 1992 and the computer game industry changed forever. Eight years is a very long time in games, and things have moved on considerably from the 2B6s and masses of large pixels covering half of the screen. But, with id Software announcing that there's a new *Doom* game in the works and developer Gray Matter taking *Wolfenstein* into the next millennium, it seems that first-person shooters are closing a neat circle. If you're unfamiliar with the Gray Matter name, it's because it's

a brand new company made up of ex-Xatrix people, the makers of the swearathon *Kingpin*.

Recreating the good old "kick some Nazi ass" spirit that kept the Hollywood industry alive for so long, *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* puts you on a one-man *Guns Of Navarone* type mission to deepest, darkest Germany. The thing you're sent to destroy isn't a weapon, it's

realistic weapons are, and it looks like Gray Matter are doing their best to recreate Lugers and other WWII weapons to the finest possible detail.

We're lucky enough to have seen the game running (or at least the first

with a flamethrower and they'll scatter and take cover.

But it's not just Nazis either. The story quickly unfolds a group of genetic experiments, some more successful than others and these provide a different threat to flesh and bone fascism.

Another thing to look forward to is the fact that the environment is highly interactive and the detail in the textures is simply amazing, as a quick look at these early screenshots show all too well. The developers actually went to the trouble of photographing real German castles and digitising the pictures into the game, so take the time to appreciate them.

One thing's for sure, though, *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* is destined to be one the biggest games of next year. [M]

“Recreating the good old ‘kick some Nazi ass’ spirit that kept the Hollywood industry alive for so long, *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* puts you on a one-man *Guns Of Navarone* type mission to deepest, darkest Germany”

Himmler's mad plan to create a race of undead soldiers.

Despite the weird horror/sci-fi connotations of these sinister experiments, the weapons are going to be strictly accurate for the WWII time period. Anyone who's played *Counter-Strike* will know how important

level) and the AI is already looking like it could match or better *Half-Life*'s. The Nazi enemies take cover, sneak up on you and even throw back your grenades before they explode (they use timed fuses). They also react differently depending on the weapon you're brandishing. Go up to a group



Makes a change from F22s at any rate.

CLOSE THE HATCHES, A STORM'S COMIN'...

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Rage Warrington

PUBLISHER Infogrames

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE End 2000

WEBSITE www.rage.co.uk

IN SUMMARY

Update of DID's *EF2000* title using an updated version of the *Wargasm* engine. Fly the *Eurofighter Typhoon* in missions over Iceland, which is a first, stopping the Russians from invading. Should combine hardcore simulation with easy accessibility.

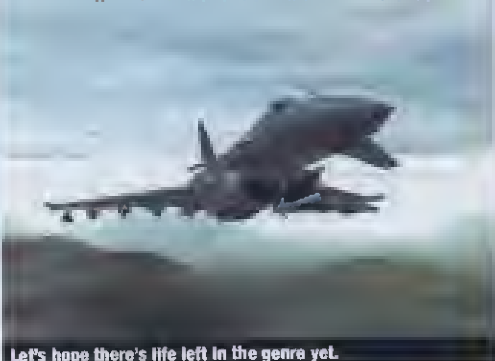
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Back in the good old days, DID flight sims were always a special event in the gaming world. While DID itself might be gone, the spirit still lives on in the boys and girls of Rage Warrington that bought them. Besides, have you seen these graphics?

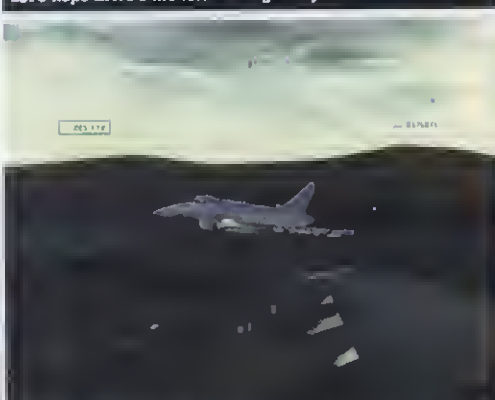
TYPHOON

Oh my, a flight sim – an actual flight sim. Someone get the Pope on the phone, there appears to be a miracle happening here


★ BOMBING BJORK Paul Presley




Let's hope there's life left in the genre yet.




River deep, mountain high. Just try not to hit either of them.




Resupplies are thin on the ground, so make every shot count.



Weapons are all European in origin for a change.



Weather will play more than just a cosmetic role, interfering with radar locks and the like.



The graphical quality of DID lives on at Rage.

It seems that no one's told the ex-DID gang at Rage Warrington that the flight-sim genre has as much life left in it as Sir Alec Guinness these days. Which is a shame as *Typhoon* looks like it could be a real corker. Making use of the vastly underrated *Wargasm* engine, *Typhoon* marks a return to the ex-DID team's heyday, simulating the Eurofighter – Europe's answer to the Russian and American super-jets.

Having 'invaded' Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, the Russians have next turned their attention to Iceland. Apparently, in such a scenario, the

keep Commie hands away from NATO's valuable ammo, fuel and porn supplies.

The advantages to using only Iceland as a setting are numerous. First up there's the challenging, undulating landscape to contend with; 40,000 square miles of glaciers, valleys, mountains, all with rich and detailed weather patterns, which should provide a sufficiently rewarding setting for any pilot – especially those on suicide detail. Secondly, it means that the developers can plot out a highly

infantry units – who would probably freeze their arses off anyway – the ground war has tanks, artillery and naval units, all behaving independently of your actions. Unlike *Total Air War*, however, there's no AWACS support, meaning you have to rely far more heavily on your radar and communication links to get an accurate picture of what's going on. So it's a good job that your radio commands and the levels of wingman AI are more detailed than ever before, allowing you to have greater control over your squadron.

This extends to outside the cockpit as well. Not only do you have to worry about keeping your men alive in the air, you're given the chance to manage their lives back at base. Each

pilot under your command has his or her own levels of morale, fatigue and skills. And, once a campaign starts, there's no turning back – there are no reinforcements or magically endless supply of ammo and spare parts. If a pilot is shot down behind enemy lines, he may end up being captured and tortured – or even traded for captured POWs. Naturally, the Russian enemy here is the Hollywood-style 'evil' Russian that would condone such actions. Real-life Russians are our good friends and comrades now and would never dream of such a thing.

Technically, *Typhoon* is passing all sorts of previous benchmarks, as the pictures on these pages will show, but the real proof will be in the gameplay. Hopefully Rage's influence will do enough to elevate the game out of the traditional hardcore-only niche that's been killing the genre lately. If not, communism will have to take a backseat to capitalist market forces as *Typhoon*'s biggest enemy. **EW**

“Typhoon looks like a real corker and, hopefully, Rage's influence will do enough to elevate the game out of the hardcore-only niche that's been killing the genre”

home of Bjork and Penguins (*You've never been there, have you? – Ed*) would be of immense strategic importance as a resupply point for western troops. Thus, it's your job to

detailed ground campaign. As with *Total Air War*, *Typhoon* gives you the option of stand-alone single missions or a full-on ground campaign to contend with. Aside from individual



With meteors raining out of the skies, *Art Of Magic* offers some of the most impressive 3D effects we've ever seen in a strategy game.

NEVER MIND THE GOLLOPS MAGIC & MAYHEM: THE ART OF MAGIC

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Charybdis

PUBLISHER Virgin

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Early 2001

WEBSITE www.magicandmayhem.co.uk

IN SUMMARY

Equal parts RPG, RTS and adventure, *Art Of Magic* has you as a young spellcaster out to rid the world of evil. Cast fireballs, summon zombies and keep an eye on your magic levels – all in 3D spin-o-vision.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

The original *Magic & Mayhem* was a well-deserved classic a couple of years back, and engaged us all in single and multiplayer games. The sequel, although out of Mythos' hands, looks poised not only to equal the feats of its predecessor, but exceed them. If Charybdis create a workable interface, we should have little to fear.

A new team sets out to create the 3D sequel to the 1998 classic from *X-COM* creators Mythos

★ **CASTING DOUBTS ASIDE** Richie Shoemaker



st spells, you need to save energy.



more, young teller.

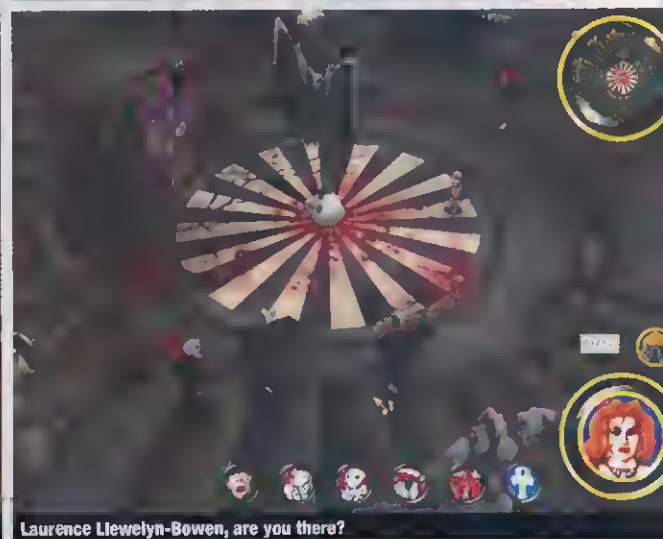


BULLETIN

That Dave Woods gets everywhere (see page 84).



Mix some ingredients and see what spells you can come up with.



Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen, are you there?

It was quite surprising to hear that a sequel to *Magic & Mayhem* was in development. Even more surprising was the fact that its creator Mythos (of *X-COM* trilogy fame) would not be involved in the coding of it. Although critically acclaimed, *Magic & Mayhem* failed to set the charts alight and in these days when sales mean sequels, it seemed to us that the *Magic & Mayhem* series would end there and then.

Thankfully, our fears were unfounded and the series continues, this time in the creative hands of Charybdis who, like Mythos, is based in the UK. Now it has to be said that Charybdis isn't the most prolific developer around – the 3D RTS *Machines* being its biggest game to date – but the fact that they're British bodes well, because the original game had a uniquely English charm far removed from grittier US games such as *Diablo*. In short, *Magic & Mayhem* was something of a gem, from which

we hope Charybdis will fashion a glittering diamond.

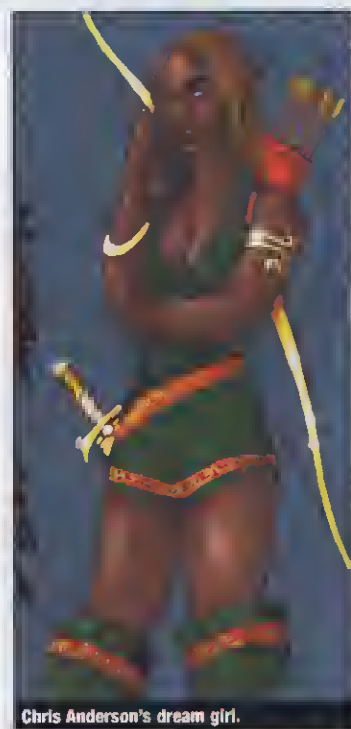
As with its predecessor, *Art Of Magic* will place you in the velvety shoes of a young wizard apprentice whose aim in life is to extend his range of spells, keep his mana (magical energy) levels up and save

“If there's any justice in the world, *Art Of Magic* will become the best-selling game *Magic & Mayhem* could've been”

the world over a series of 30 missions. Fortunately, our young Merlin won't be alone in his quest, because as his power grows new spells will become available, from issuing fireballs to summoning lightning storms or showers of meteors. There will, in fact, be in excess of 60 spells, over a third of which allow you to summon a variety of creatures – from skeletons,

elves archers and goblins to giant stone golems and fire-breathing dragons. Each spell will require you to have the right ingredients to concoct it, and for it to be successful you'll need to have control over those areas of the map that produce mana in abundance.

From what we've seen so far, *Art Of Magic* will feature the same simple interface as the first game, although this time we will have 3D accelerated characters rather than the bit-mapped sprites of old and replacing the isometric view is a configurable 3D camera, allowing you to swoop, zoom and rotate about the battlefield to catch the best views of the action. Already the game looks spectacular and yet retains the simplicity, charm and quality of the original game underneath. The scale of the characters far exceeds those of the first game and, if there's any justice in the world, *Art Of Magic* will become the huge selling game *Magic & Mayhem* could have been. **[M]**



Chris Anderson's dream girl.

WANT TO TRADE?

NEWS EDITOR Mark Hill



It always makes us laugh when we see excited chats on Websites about ECTS and people

boasting that they've managed to get themselves a ticket. Although the European trade show plays an important role in the gaming community – despite playing a very distant second fiddle to E3 – almost everyone involved approaches it with a mixture of dread and anxiety.

And three days of walking through crowds of geeks, passing in front of hundreds of screens showing abominable console games, extortionately priced food and beer and a long list of appointments with companies you've never heard of is more than enough to add another cynical feather to our weather-worn journo caps. To add to our problems, there is nowhere near the amount of near-naked models hanging around the stands pretending to fancy every spotty teenager in sight than there used to be. Although the marvellously named *Erotica Island* did buck the trend with two fine specimens, ensuring that the dark corner it occupied became the most heavily populated area of the show.

Of course, there's always the chance to see some exciting new games in action, kept away from the eyes of the great unwashed. But even those are a rare treat now that most big companies, such as Eidos and Activision, do their own thing a couple of weeks before the show. This year, *Gunman*, along with *Mafia*, was one of the most impressive offerings, having seemingly appeared out of nowhere and showcasing the growing importance of the mods community. It's an interesting development in the relentless battle between the big corporate publishers who do it for money and the hardcore fans who do it for love. And it comes at the same time as the announcement that *Counter-Strike* will also be getting a stand-alone release. Maybe next year ECTS will be held in dozens of bedrooms across the continent. Boy, are we looking forward to that...

TECHHEAD

The latest and greatest hardware news

P.20



THE PCZONE CHARTS

What's in, out, up and down

P.26



Chart Track

GUNMAN

The *Half-Life* mod gets a full release

Gunman, originally intended as a single-player mod for *Half-Life*, is to get a stand-alone release as a full *Half-Life* product. Having seen it at ECTS it's easy to see why Havas Interactive decided to do it.

In fact, the game is so impressive that we decided to expand the small news piece on page 21 with a load of new screenshots. As you can see, *Gunman* looks very different from the Valve classic, but we can report that it exudes the same magnificent quality.

"When we saw it we thought it was

polished game we saw at the show. The sharpness and detail of the environments and models is such that it's hard to believe some amateurs picked up the *Half-Life* engine and transformed it into such a gorgeous and innovative FPS.

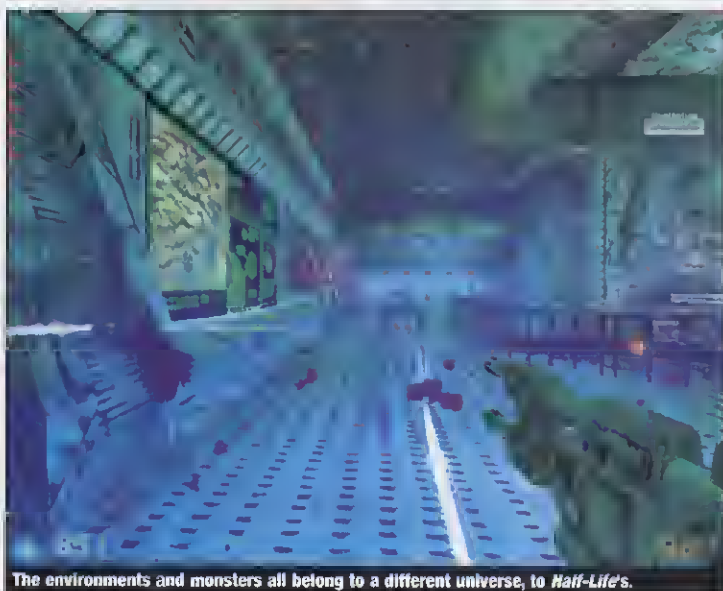
Rewolf, the developers responsible for the game, are based all around the world and have been working on it non-stop in their spare time. While the style and feel is still very recognisably *Half-Life*, all the models and environments are completely

"You'll be sent on a mission to find out about an alien race, the Xenomes, and will also be running into weird cowboys, vicious machines and dinosaurs over five planets"

amazing. They've tweaked the engine, making it look better and even allowing you to use vehicles," said a Havas spokesperson on the reason it granted this Total Conversion official status. Remember that *Counter-Strike*, the god of *Half-Life* mods, is only now starting to introduce driveable vehicles, making *Gunman* all the more remarkable. Not only that, it was probably the most

new. It's almost as if another development house had licensed Valve's engine and made a completely new game. In a way, that's exactly what has happened, but without anything as banal as licensing going on. Valve has even helped out, solving the engine problems Rewolf ran into from time to time.

As reported previously, the story has you as a soldier sent out to find

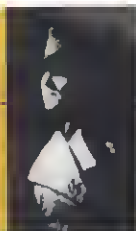


The environments and monsters all belong to a different universe, to *Half-Life*'s.

MAN WHO KNOWS

The latest industry gossip

P.30



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

Planet Of The Apes and others

P.31



HOTSHOTS

Have a gander at some of the latest screenshots from the forthcoming Project IGI

P.32



GETS FULL-LIFE UPDATE

information on an alien race called the Xenomes. Apart from these aliens you'll also be running into weird cowboys, vicious machines and *Jurassic Park*-style dinosaurs, scattered over five planets. Set five or ten years after *Half-Life*, it's still unclear how the plot will fit into the *Half-Life* world or what effects, if any, it will have on the game's sequel.

At the show, we saw massive alien monsters, enormous dinosaurs, enemies that ran away and took aim, enemies that kicked you if you got close, and even changed weapon to suit the range, and a rather impressive snow level, where the ice melts away once you've destroyed some kind of temperature control system thereby releasing a load of frozen monsters.

The AI has been improved, although you won't be able to enlist any helpful security guards to draw fire from you. There are still scientists roaming around, but they are completely unrecognisable from the ones we're so used to. The weapons are not only new, they're completely customisable and have different modes of fire (which you

unlock as the game progresses in an almost RPG fashion), thus allowing for an intelligent use adapted to the circumstances of each situation.

Taking a leaf from the *Soldier Of Fortune* book of mutilation, you can now blow off the head of your enemies with a well-placed shot, although the game doesn't reach anywhere near *Raven's* level of sadism. You'll also be happy to know there's a fully zoomable sniper rifle, far improved from the one in *Opposing Force*. Already in the final stages of development, *Gunman* will be in the shops in November.

Enemies run away and take full advantage of the weapons at their disposal.



Driving vehicles is easy and works incredibly well.



The interface has changed but remains functional and intuitive.



You'll need to program your weapon before you can take out something as big as that ship.

SPACE COMMANDOS

The *Star Trek* franchise muscles into yet another genre

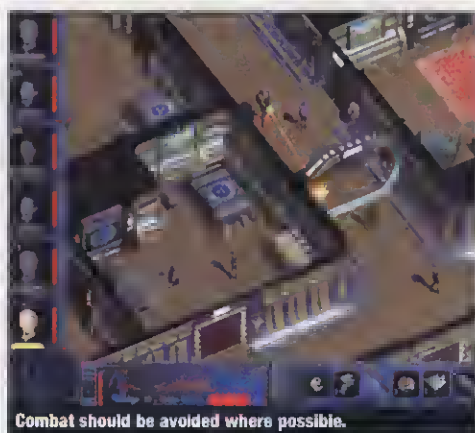
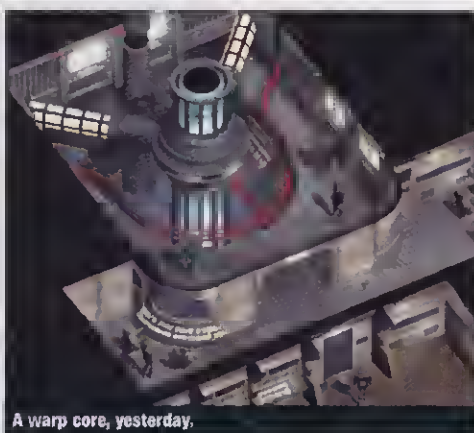
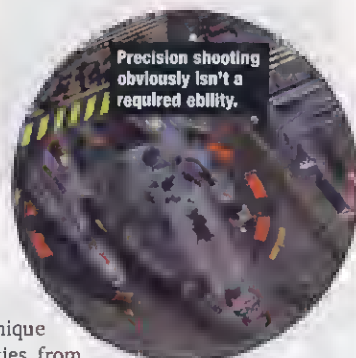
Having pretty much exhausted the space combat sim, resource management, adventure and first-person shooter genres, the unstoppable juggernaut of merchandise that is the *Star Trek* universe is now turning its attention to the only genre it's yet to boldly go into – the squad-based strategy game.

Star Trek: Away Team is essentially *Commandos* with pointy ears and phasers. Commanding a team of 22 Starfleet-trained special forces officers, you'll

be sent on missions across 18 different locations – from Klingon jungles to the now almost obligatory Borg cube (remember the days when the Borg were a rarely encountered race of terrifying aliens? Nowadays they seem to be as commonplace as syphilis in Essex, and just as scary). Missions include such death-defying escapades as rescuing captives, powering down exploding warp drives and generally making the galaxy a better place for sci-fi nerds everywhere.

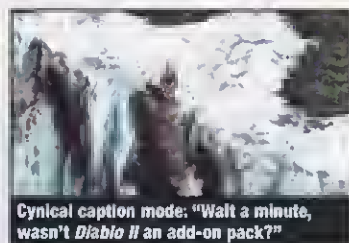
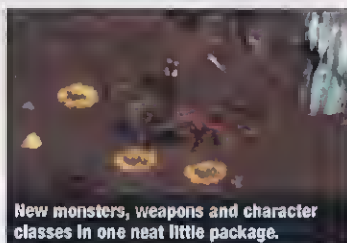
Each team member has unique skills and abilities, from medics to demolition experts, and Activision is placing great emphasis on the espionage and stealth aspects of the game.

Star Trek: Away Team is currently on course for a winter 2001 release, so there'll be plenty of time to iron your Starfleet uniform and practice your Vulcan salute before you get your hands on it.



CONTROL MORE GROUND

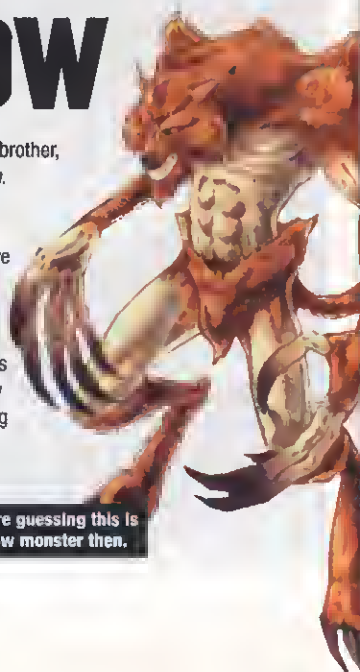
The massively popular RTS *Ground Control* is to get its very own expansion pack. Going by the name of *Dark Conspiracy*, the add-on is being developed by High Voltage with a little help from the Swedish Massive Entertainment and should be out in the next couple of months, courtesy of Havas Interactive. As with the original, the emphasis is firmly on tactical battles, proving that you don't have to spew out all that resource management *Command & Conquer*-ness to sell loads of copies. There are 15 new missions on the way, designed with new environments and terrains and a third faction will be added to the story, bringing with it the predictable line of new units and weapons. The original units will also be getting their share of new weapons and there are new multiplayer modes in development. Aren't you the lucky ones?



BETTER THE DIABLO YOU KNOW

The best-selling *Diablo II* is already getting a little brother, going by the cute name of *The Lord Of Destruction*. Blizzard's add-on pack has you battling against Diablo's brother, Baal, for a change, who is just as intent on bringing hell to earth as his destructive sibling. Two new character classes will be introduced: the Assassin and the Druid, both of which you'll be able to play the original *Diablo II* with. Our resident *Diablo II* fanatic, Keith Pullin, has confirmed that this is "a good thing" and we know that he wouldn't lie to us. We don't expect anything ground-breaking, but dozens of new monsters, weapons and items have been confirmed. Apparently, the expansion has been in development for a few months now, so a release date should be very close indeed.

We're guessing this is a new monster then.



CODIES HAVE A STAB

UK super-publisher picks up graphically impressive action romp

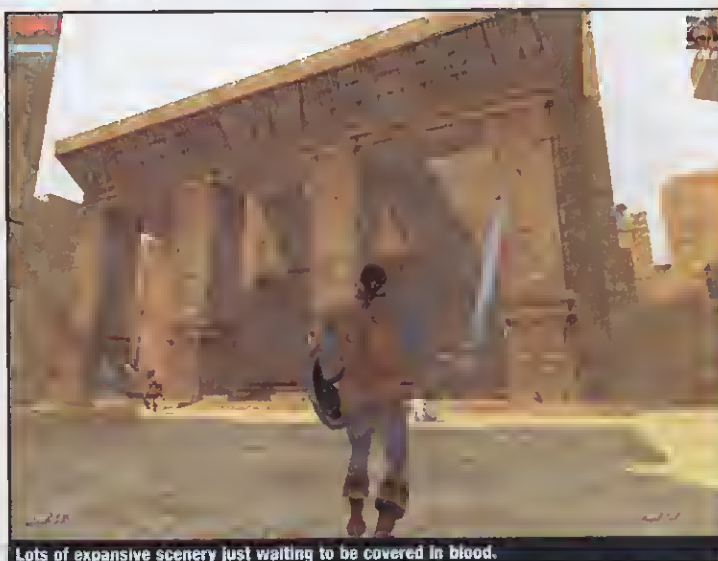
Long-term *PC ZONE* readers may remember us making a bit of a fuss a year or so ago over a little-known sword-and-club 'em up called *Blade*. Developed in Spain by Rebel Act Studios (and published by then office tave Gremlin), the game boasted some of the finest real-time lighting effects we'd ever seen – as well as a healthy dose of justifiably gratuitous violence towards orcs, dwarves and other such tairy folk.

Unfortunately, the game, along with Gremlin, vanished without trace before it was ever finished and everyone's attention was distracted by the likes of *Half-Life* and *Quake III*. Luckily, those of us still wondering whatever happened to the atmospheric flickering torches and severed heads of *Blade* can sleep easy as Codemasters has announced it's picked up the game and is ready to release it to an over-18 world this November. Although, with the press release making comments such as "pick up the dismembered limb and use it to club the victim as jets of blood pour from the wounds", hopes for a subtle game of maturity and intelligence aren't exactly running high.

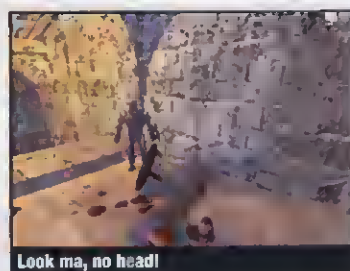
Retitled *Severance: Blade Of Darkness*, it still contains one of the most advanced lighting engines we've ever seen – flames dance and flicker on torches, creating real-time moving shadows – as well as plenty of über-violence to keep the kids happy. Codemasters, of course, is attempting to play down the gore factor, with marketing director Mike Hayes insisting that, "while the cleverly done gory combat sequences will attract everyone's attention, it's the immersive role-playing adventure and detailed graphics that will win the game its followers." Although we assume he means the detailed graphics of flying body parts and the role-playing of someone being repeatedly squirted in the face by orcs' blood.

Severance uses a team-based format for the actual game, with the player controlling four individual characters, each with their own skills and functions – and severable limbs. The usual fantasy types are on offer here, from dwarves to barbarians to the obligatory scantily-clad Amazon woman. Though we've yet to see a game that authentically recreates the fact that real-life Amazonians would actually cut off one of their breasts to aid their bowmanship.

Codemasters promises to take a responsible approach to the game, working closely with ELSA and the BBFC to ensure that they don't overstep the boundaries of acceptability. The game will carry prominent warnings of its violent nature, as well as the popular '18' rating label on the box cover. Expect a detailed look at *Severance* in the next month or so, along with plenty of outrage by the so-called 'respectable' media not long after that.



Lots of expansive scenery just waiting to be covered in blood.



Look ma, no head!



Look at those lights. Look at that blood.



The real-time shading adds to the dark, brooding atmosphere.

SHORTS

KOREAN CHALLENGE

The world's largest gaming tournament will be taking place in Korea this October, with more than 200 gamers from around the world competing for a top prize of US\$300,000. Organised by Battletop.com, Asia's largest internet game ranking service, and sponsored by Samsung Electronics, the UK qualifying event was held at the Millennium Dome earlier this month, where £15,000 was on offer to the lucky winner.

DESIGN A STICK

Gaming peripheral specialist Joytech has set up a competition to design a brand new gaming device. Product design students at colleges and universities around the country are being invited to design a gaming peripheral for the next generation. The competition is launched at the end of September and the lucky winner will be given a 12-month job in Joytech's product development department. See Joytech's website (www.joytech.net) for full details of the competition and to get an entry form.

FALLEN ANGELS

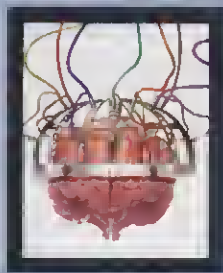
Next up from the developer of the disappointing RPG *Septerra Core* is *Seraphim*, a third-person action RPG, where as a fallen winged demigod, players must battle other mythical creatures and humans to earn their place once more at the side of their leader. There will be several 'clans' players can align themselves with, and an RPG-style experience system that will allow players to upgrade and change their winged warrior after each level. No one seems to have picked up the publishing rights, so no release date has yet been announced.



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TECHHEAD

This month: more graphics cards to confuse matters, and some tasty driving kit

★ WORDS Carlos Ruiz

RADEON UNVEILED

ATI is back on the scene with a new graphics chipset

It's been a while since they were fighting it out with the big boys, but ATI has re-entered the graphics arena late in the day with the Radeon, a next-generation product more than capable of standing up to NVIDIA's GeForce2 GTS and 3dfx's Voodoo5 5500. ATI has never been truly instrumental at the forefront of games acceleration, but now the Radeon is making people sit up and take notice.

A powerful T&L chip, christened the Charisma Engine, has been designed for the Radeon. It can handle up to 30 million triangles per second, and supports advanced character animation features, such as 4-matrix skinning and keyframe animation, giving the Radeon a more than equal playing field when compared to the GeForce2 GTS.

Presumably, as a way to appeal to people interested in 3dfx's Voodoo5, ATI has also included full scene anti-aliasing, depth of field and motion blur as graphical features. However, it strongly recommends users play in 32-bit colour at high resolutions with FSAA disabled, which suggests that its implementation of FSAA, the most important feature, is not as good as 3dfx's.

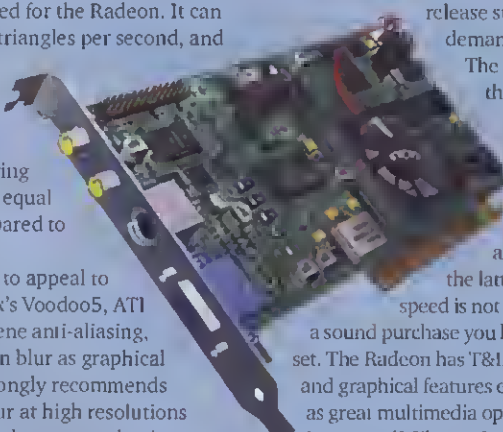
Other features include HyperZ, which increases the fill rate of the card from a typical 1.1GigaTexels/sec to a theoretical maximum of 1.3GigaTexels/sec. This works mainly by using data

compression to speed up depth of field calculations, and predetermining whether certain pixels on a 3D scene need to be rendered at all.

ATI has come up trumps on the AV front, using its multimedia know-how to make the Radeon more than capable in the DVD and video encoding/decoding domain. An optional YPrPb output on the card makes it possible for a separate HDTV tuner to stream component video straight out to a monitor or TV, and ATI has suggested that it will release such a tuner once the demand is there.

The Radeon is a quality card that delivers on all fronts, with true next-generation 3D performance. Tests carried out in games reveal benchmarks similar to its main rivals, the Voodoo5 and the GeForce2 GTS, with the latter rival coming off best. But speed is not king these days, and to make a sound purchase you have to look at the feature set. The Radeon has T&L to match the GeForce2 GTS and graphical features equal to the Voodoo5, as well as great multimedia options.

Interested? The Radeon product range consists of the 32Mb SDRAM card, the 32Mb DDR RAM card and the 64Mb DDR RAM card. The entire range, manufactured with the latest 0.18 micron technology, has core/memory speeds of between 175MHz and 183MHz, and should be priced between £150 and £300.



FACTCANNON

★ Intel (www.intel.com) is keen to impress these days, and its latest publicity stunt was to announce the release of the first 1.13GHz (1,133MHz) processor in "limited quantities only", meaning that while journalists can get hold of them with few problems, consumers are faced with a far harder task. This may be the last of the Pentium III CPUs, as the more advanced Pentium 4 will be making its debut later this year.



★ The new Nomad/D.A.P. Jukebox portable MP3 player sports a massive 6Gb of storage potential – enough for more than 100 hours (or 1,500 tracks) of CD-quality music. Obviously, the Jukebox is larger than most of its counterparts, with a shape similar to a portable CD player, but this also allows for a digital screen and loads of editing functions. See www.nomadworld.com for more details.



★ After the prospect of closure and a brief stint in the US Court of Appeal, Napster (www.napster.com) was allowed to carry on its service as normal last month. User downloads of MP3 songs quadrupled before the result of the appeal was known, adding weight to the theory that Napster is primarily used to avoid paying for music.



F1 FANTASTIC

Want a new steering wheel for your racing titles?
Take a look at these...

Not many people have heard of Thomas Enterprises (www.thomas-supervheel.com), but then not many people would spend hundreds of pounds on their driving simulation habit. This US company specialises in the highest quality steering wheels and pedals for use on standard PCs, with an emphasis on realism and durability.

Let's jump straight in at the deep end. The best and most expensive model, the TSW Formula '99, comes in four different wheel configurations: small yoke, large yoke, D-shaped and round. All cost US\$1,050 for the wheel and pedals, which once you've added delivery and tax charges for the UK, is around £800. So what do you get for your money?



Suede grip, cross-drilled paddle shifters, a teardrop gear stick, SPEC (high grade) potentiometers, and Momo stainless steel pedal covers. As it's designed for Windows-based PCs, it has desk clamps and standard connectors. Just like a typical steering wheel and pedals, but ten times better.

The same goes for the rest of the wheel/pedal kits in the range, and there are

more than ten altogether. The cheapest is the TSW2 Stock Sim Racing Controller for around £275, and despite the toned-down look and downgraded specification, it's still a great product. Then there's the TSW2 Cup Sim Racing Controller £400, the TSW GT '99 £700, and so on, each with higher quality components and design.

So they certainly aren't cheap, but we've never seen anything that comes close to the authenticity and quality of TSW. The wheels can even be modified over time, should you not want to shell out big bucks for one of the better models straight away. For the hardcore racing game enthusiast, they are the way to go.



Paul 'overrated' Scholes lends his weight to the game.



Andy Cole sends another ball into row Z.

ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER FIFA

EA unveil the latest in the long, long, long, long-running football series

Coming hot on the heels of *FA Premier League Stars 2001*, comes *FIFA 2001*, the latest game of 'proper' football from Canadian developer EA Sports. Primarily a PlayStation 2 title, the PC version will nonetheless have plenty of unique features, most notably full online support.

In an attempt to take the realism to ever greater levels, EA has roped in some of the leading talents in European football as well as Paul Scholes to offer wit, wisdom and motion

capturing. The likes of Edgar Davids, Thierry 'God' Henry, Shimon Gershon, Gaizka Mendieta and Puval Kuka joined Man U's flame-haired dwarf at the Gelredome Stadium in Holland for a day's mugging in front of the cameras (*Surely 'assisting EA in creating the game'? - Ed*), while Germany's Lothar Matthäus went one step further, journeying to EA Sports' studios in Canada.

Detail runs into anal levels this time round (er, if you see what we mean), with linesmen

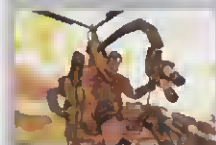
flagging down offside violators, animated crowds singing and chanting, advertising boards rotating mid-game. More importantly, though, is the talk of online updates as the real-life teams change their squads. Could this signal an end to the thrice-yearly *FIFA* releases we've come to know and, er, love? What do you think?

We'll have more on *FIFA 2001* in a few months, so stay tuned until then.

SHORTS

GUNMAN OPENS UP

Revealed last issue, *Gunman* is a single-player mod for *Half-Life*. Since the story, however, we hear that the mod will be released as a standalone product this Christmas. Moreover, you won't need a copy of the original *Half-Life* to play it. A demo should be available next month.



FELINE FELONY

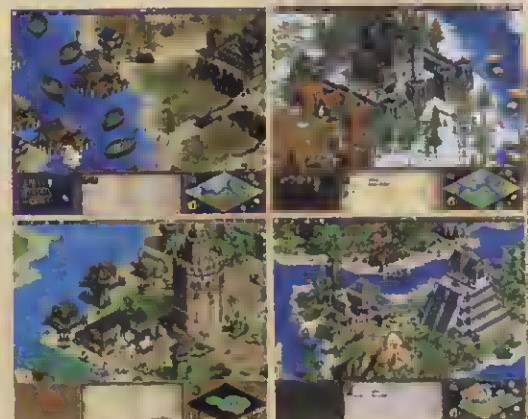
Hot on the heels of *Thief III* and *Picasso* there's yet more robbery antics coming to the PC. *Kat Burglar* draws heavily from the 'gentleman thief' image exemplified by Pierce Brosnan in *The Thomas Crown Affair*, except that in this case you play a lady thief called Kat. Set in the '60s on the Island of Mont St-Michel, you are part of a team of six sexy female thieves who put stealth above violence when hired to steal some valuable jewels. Due for release next year, this Krome Studios-developed game is yet to find a publisher.



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Microsoft



Monaco provides the biggest draw for Ubi Soft's effort.



Eidos is including a career mode that sees you rise from humble beginnings.

EIDOS AND UBI SOFT AIM FOR POLE

Two Grand Prix sims get set to go head to head later this year

With Geoff Crammond's latest take on the exciting/deadly dull world of Formula One racing barely out of the traps, challenges to the crown have been issued by both Ubi Soft and Eidos.

F1 Racing Championship, the third F1 game from Ubi Soft is pinning its hopes on supposedly perfect recreations of the 16 circuits. Using global positioning satellites, tracks are accurate to within a centimetre. Now players can pretend drive using the same trajectories and passing speeds as the real drivers, recreating "exact real-life conditions", according to Ubi Soft – minus fatal impacts with walls at 90mph and angry egotistical Germans

chasing you down the pit lane after a race for daring to cut him up, of course.

Eidos, meanwhile, is focusing on more traditional gameplay elements with *F1 World Grand Prix 2000*. Novices (or drunks) can jump in for a fast-paced, simplified mechanics, arcade-type affair, "providing a full coin-op experience in your own home," according to Eidos. Whether this extends to including a gang of toughs in the box to stand in the corner of your living room, glaring menacingly and making you wish you'd gone to the cinema instead hasn't yet been decided.

Alternatively, the Grand Prix mode takes *Gran Turismo* as

a model, requiring you to first prove yourself as a driver before landing a job with the big boys of *Formula One*. As your career progresses, you're allowed greater access to both the car's mechanics and the team's management, eventually working your way to the very top of the tree.

"The aim of the Grand Prix mode is to recreate the feeling of actually being a real Formula One driver," says Eidos. Although, we expect this recreation is going to stop short of actually dumping a million dollars into your lap every two weeks for little more than three hours work.

Both games are set for a November release, which should prove interesting.

POT-TER LUCK FOR EA

In case you haven't already been bored to tears of suicidal depression by Harry Potter and the media overkill, you'll no doubt be encouraged to learn that EA is attempting to push you over the edge once and for all with the announcement of a series of videogame tie-ins. All four of the books will make the jump into the gaming arena, along with any subsequent films made out of the overexposed bespectacled one. Not only that, but EA has also been given permission to design online-only games played via EA.com. Potter's

'mother', author JK Rowling will work closely with the development team, despite confessing to having no prior gaming experience, which is encouraging.

A small boy yesterday.



Make peace, not war.



News headlines scroll across the bottom as you fight.

MAKE PEACE WITH THE FRENCH

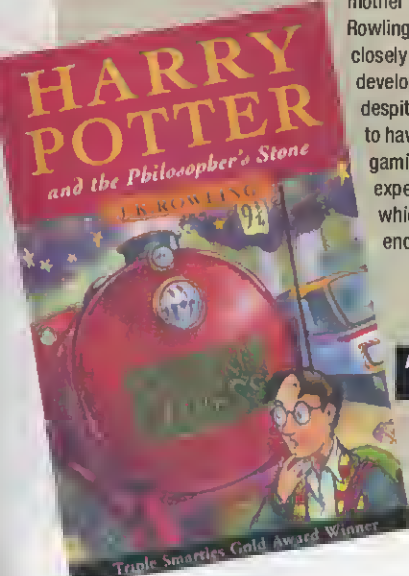
Peacemakers adds a new dimension to the real-time strategy genre

The next stage in the continual evolution of the real-time strategy genre is about to take place as Ubisoft brings us *Peacemakers*. Developed by French artificial intelligence researchers Mathématiques Appliquées (AI specialists from France), *Peacemakers* is a strategic game in the purest sense. What sets it apart from other RTS titles is the use of civilian and media units, all of whom have an effect on how you fight your battles.

As the UN has learnt to its cost, public opinion is a far bigger threat than any amount of ethnic

cleansing, and *Peacemakers* simulates this factor to the full. Each battle has to be won politically as well as militarily – even if that means pulling back and sparing the enemy when you're at the cusp of victory. There are also some major developments in the use of AI, with troops all having individual personalities and human behaviour patterns as well as the ability to 'learn' as the game progresses.

Add to that all the usual RTS ingredients and you've got one intriguing sounding game. *Peacemakers* is due this winter.





If you look closely you can actually see the terror on the people's faces.



This is the deadliest fairground attraction you're ever likely to come across.



Blackpool's 'Big One' in all its glory.



This is Alton Towers at its most frightening.



The cool thing about this ride is that you kill everyone on it.

ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

History is made with the first game ever to be set in Blackpool

Those of you too fat, lazy and palsied to get off your jardy arses and go to actual, real-life amusement parks will no doubt be overjoyed to hear that Hasbro Interactive is giving you the opportunity to expand your virtual rollercoaster experiences from the safety of your own sofas.

Loopy Landscapes is the second add-on pack to be released for Chris

Sawyer's theme park-inspired *Rollercoaster Tycoon* and comes complete with the vomit-inducing rides at Blackpool's Pleasure Beach and Alton Towers. All rides are open for editing, meaning you can try your hand at killing gangs of hapless punters before the real ones eventually do. Other additions to the original game include new urban, desert and arctic scenery, a medieval

castle theme, T-shirt stands and that other over-rated American blight on modern-day living - the coffee shop.

"We are delighted to be working with Hasbro and are extremely pleased with the way Chris Sawyer has managed to recreate Blackpool Pleasure Beach and its rides," claimed some non-entity for the seaside resort. While Sawyer, under no false illusions about the importance of his

game, also commented on the pack: "Even after four years, *Rollercoaster Tycoon* still fascinates me. I took on the challenge of creating a second add-on pack and this is the result." Presumably, the challenges of paying the rent and creating something original were totally beyond him. The aptly-named *Loopy Landscapes* is out at the end of September. I bet you just can't wait.

ION STORM STEALS THIEF

Eleventh hour reprieve for the popular burgle 'em up

Following the massive public outcry (in Internet gaming circles anyway) when Looking Glass went tits up, the Wimbledon-based publisher realised that a good game is a terrible thing to waste and offered the licence to *Deus Ex* designer Warren Spector and his plucky gang at Ion Storm. Spector had played a part in the first *Thief* title and has jumped at the chance to get involved once again.

"*Thief* changed the face of gaming forever," said Spector on the deal. "Everyone at Ion Storm is thrilled and a bit humbled at the prospect of continuing and building on the work of the talented men and women at Looking Glass." Asked about his plans for the title, Spector remained tight-lipped, but did say: "Rest easy. We respect the *Thief* tradition and will do everything in our power not only to

live up to everyone's justifiably high expectations, but also to surpass them." At least four ex-Looking Glass designers have also joined the Ion Storm team following the news.

At the time of Looking Glass's demise, lead designer Randy Smith hinted at the direction the third *Thief* title was to take: "We were going to do an open-ended, self-directed city thing, where you wander around the city and steal at your leisure." Although no details on Spector's vision for the series have been revealed, with *Deus Ex*, *System Shock* and the *Ultima Underworld* series all containing large, free-roaming, open-ended level structures, hopes are high that Looking Glass's original plans will remain intact. *Thief 2* sold more than 220,000 units worldwide, attracting both critical and commercial acclaim.

It's a dream: you can wander around the city and loot everything at your leisure.



SHORTS

PARADISE ON ACID

Developed by Mist-Land, *Paradise Cracked* is a mish-mash of tactical/RPG strategy and cyberpunk sci-fi. Allegedly in the vein of *Jagged Alliance*, *Paradise*'s main characters are a young hacker and his chums. It's due out mid-2001.

RAVEWIZZ

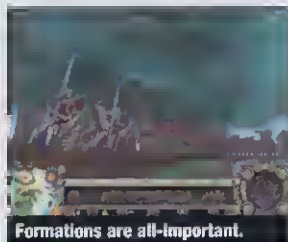
Published by Infogrames, *TechnoMage* is a cute adventure RPG combining combat, puzzles and exploration that should appeal to fans of Japanese console games. Not surprisingly it will appear simultaneously on PlayStation and PC early next year.

EDN ON AND ON

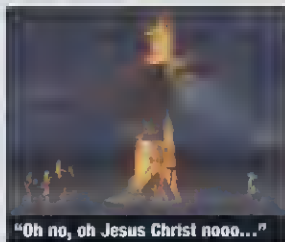
Airtix Dogfighter publisher EON Digital Entertainment has announced *Mission Humanity* and *Crime City* for release this October. *Mission Humanity* is a sci-fi RTS where completed maps still play an active part in the game, while *Crime City* is a *B-Hunter* lookalike where you chase criminals through the skies of a futuristic metropolis while avoiding other flying traffic. Both are the work of the Polish developer, Techland.



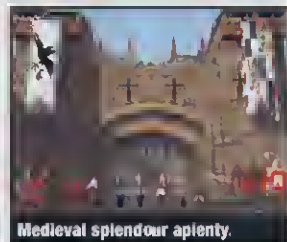
An army of darkness sallies forth.



Formations are all-important.



"Oh no, oh Jesus Christ nooo..."



Medieval splendour aplenty.

'KING HELL

Shogun meets Age Of Kings meets Evil Dead

So you've been enjoying the manifold delights of those cheeky Japanese scamps with *Shogun: Total War*, but let's be honest here – it could really do with some 20 foot demons from hell with mouths in their stomachs, horns on their heads and fireballs shooting from their hands. That, at least, is the opinion of Black Cactus Group, the designers behind *Warrior Kings*, a real-time strategy title that combines the military tactics of *Shogun*, the resource management of *Age Of Kings* and the evil demonic power of *Steps (Surely Black Sabbath? – Ed.)*

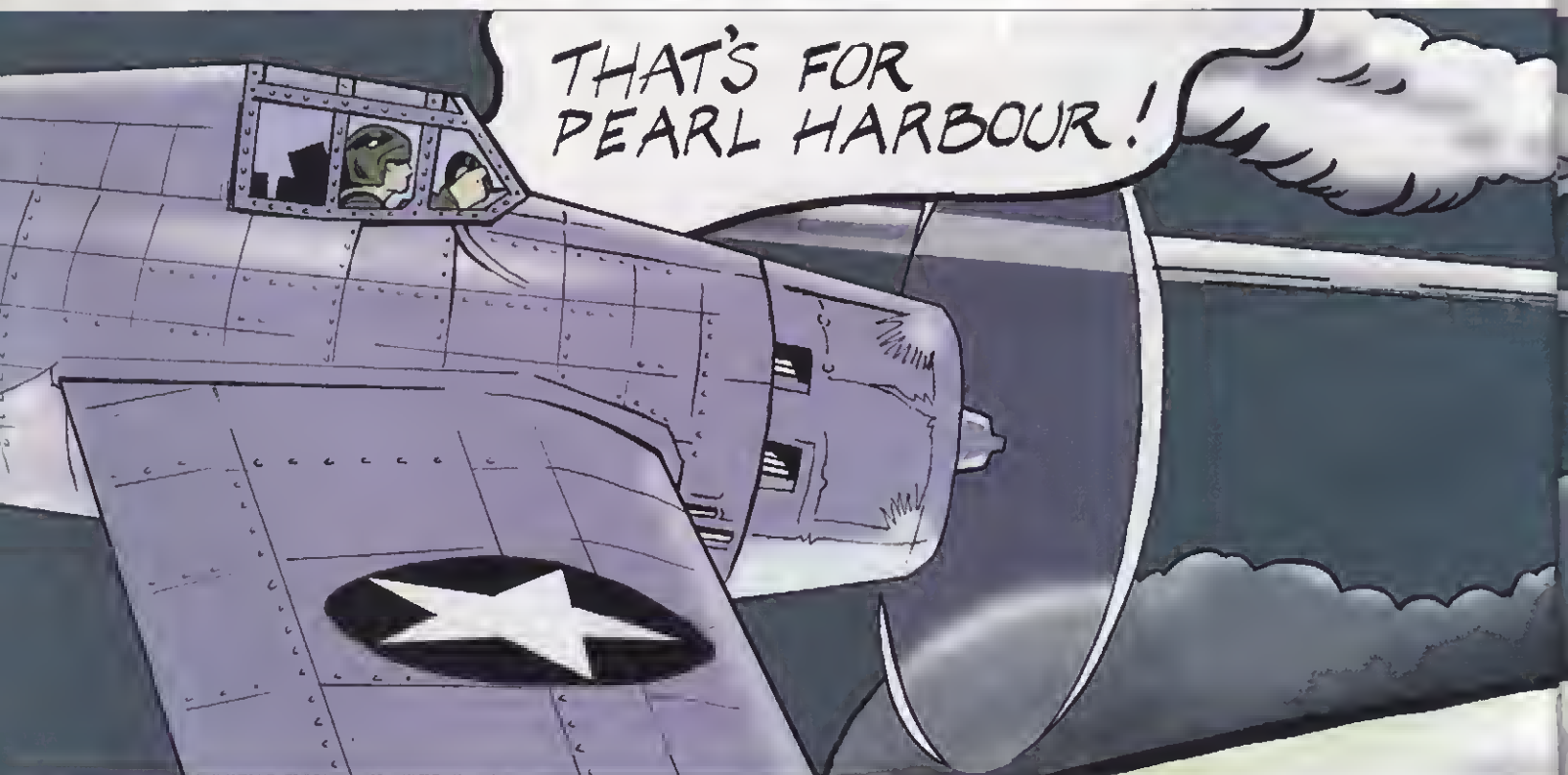
Build a kingdom, lord it up over the hapless peasants, thrive and prosper in a medieval world, and eventually take up arms against your neighbouring Kings using extensive military tactics. What makes the game unique is that you can also harness the forces of good or evil to summon up god-like magic or demonic beasts.

One interesting aspect of the multiplayer game is the evolving gameplay. Up to eight players can take part and all sides begin on an equal footing. It's only the manner of each player's strategy that determines whether they become good or evil, meaning your opponents will constantly be able to surprise you.

For those of you chomping at the pagan bit, *Warrior Kings* will be published by Havas Interactive and is due out early next year.



Eyes bigger than his belly.



1942... THE BITTER REVENGE OF PEARL HARBOUR IS FLOODING THE PACIFIC... ROOKIES ARE NEEDED, FAST...

DEUS EX DEUX

Spector's masterpiece gets the sequel treatment

Ion Storm has wasted no time starting work on *Deus Ex 2*, the sequel to the most acclaimed game since *Half-Life*. Warren Spector, as reported elsewhere in these pages, is going to be busy supervising *Thief III*, so his role on *Deus Ex 2* is likely to be less hands-on. The fact that many ex-Looking Glass members are joining the project should ensure there is no detriment in quality, while Mr Spector assures us he'll still be very much in charge.

"I've been saying for a while now that because the world of *Deus Ex* ended up being rich enough and the characters intriguing enough, I hoped we'd get the chance to set more stories in that world and explore what happened to those characters after the closing credits," he says.

Although the game is still at an embryonic stage, the biggest development issue is the move away from the *Unreal* engine, which caused so many problems with

certain 3D cards. The rumours are that it could be substituted with the *Quake III* or *Lith-Tech* engines, a mouthwatering prospect as long as it doesn't adversely affect gameplay. How *Quake* would cope with all that sneaking around is a problem that *Rage* failed to solve in *Voyager: Elite Force*, but if Ion Storm can slow it down it would be a tremendous coup for the game. But what's really got our gaming senses tingling is Ion Storm's promise to provide even greater player freedom than before, as well as adding plenty of new features. As if that wasn't enough, fans who can't wait will be happy to hear there could also be a *Deus Ex* add-on pack in the works. And if that doesn't happen there are plenty of mods being produced at the moment. Watch our Online section for more news.

Ⓢ JC Denton will be back, bigger, better and with more freedom than ever.



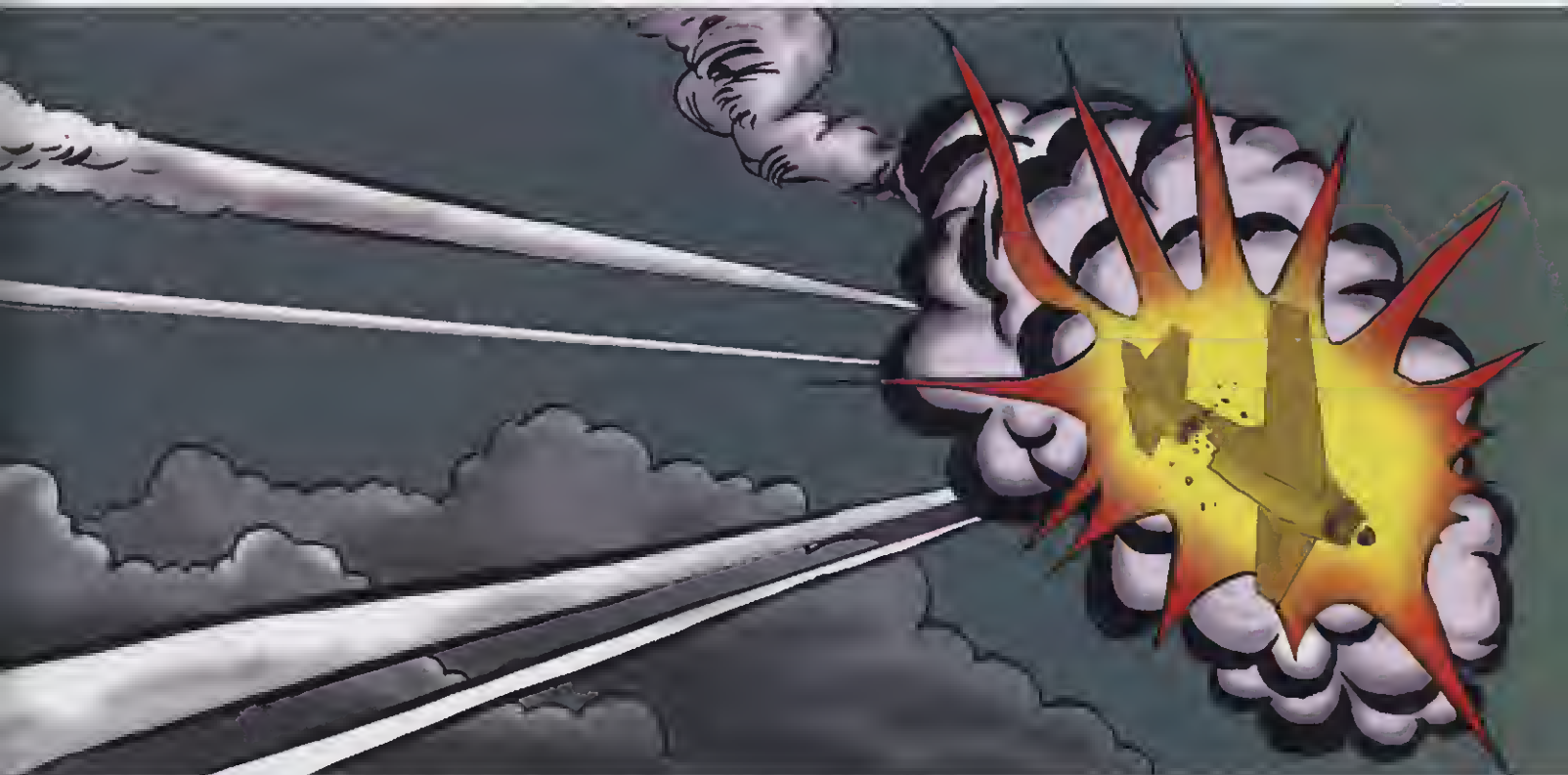
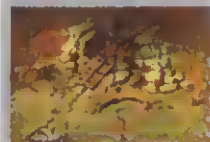
SHORTS

POWER UP

Romanian developer Piron is working on *Pure Power*, a real-time sci-fi strategy game that puts a small team of individuals and vehicles under your command, bringing it closer to a classic *X-COM* style game than an out-and-out *C&C* clone. The resources are technology, honour and fortune and your soldiers will have leadership, close combat, camouflage and sniper skills. At the moment there is no publisher or release date.

HOW TO DEAL WITH DEATH

Developed by French company Oeil Pour Oeil, *Death Dealer* is a good-looking RPG set in a fantasy world and featuring such diverse missions as assassination and exploration. The combat is a mixture of real-time and turn-based using a party of four characters. There will be lots of sub-games to keep you busy when it arrives next year. No publisher has snapped it up yet.



MISSIONS ARE REAL... AIRCRAFT AUTHENTIC AND BATTLES FIERCE... CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY

www.combat2.co.uk

Microsoft
Combat Flight Simulator 2
WWII Pacific Theater

CHARTS

Everything you need to know about which games are selling by the shedload, plus the buzz on the streets – where you tell us what's hot and what's not

THE TOP 10

AUG	SEP	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
1	1	F1 GRAND PRIX 3	GEDFF CRAMMOND	HASBRO	80%
NE	2	DEUS EX	ION STORM	EIDDS	94%
RE	3	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
5	4	SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR	CREATIVE ASSEMBLY	EA	93%
7	5	UNREAL TOURNAMENT	EPIC/DIGITAL EXTREMES	INFIDGRAMES	90%
2	6	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER – SEASON 99/00	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	92%
RE	7	C&C: TIBERIAN SUN	WESTWOOD	EA	82%
3	8	DIABLO II	BLIZZARD	HAVAS	72%
4	9	ICEWIND DALE	BLACK ISLE	INTERPLAY	75%
RE	10	DELTA FORCE 2	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	63%

THE TOP 10

AUG	SEP	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
2	1	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
NE	2	DEUS EX	ION STORM	EIDDS	94%
1	3	GRAND PRIX 3	GEDFF CRAMMOND	HASBRO	80%
6	4	CHAMP MAN SEASON 99/00	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDDS	92%
5	5	SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR	CREATIVE ASSEMBLY	EA	93%
4	6	DIABLO II	BLIZZARD	HAVAS	72%
9	7	AOE II: THE AGE OF KINGS	ENSEMBLE STUDIOS	MICROSOFT	89%
7	8	EARTH 2150	TOPWARE	MATTEL	84%
10	9	ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON	CHRIS SAWYER	HASBRO	82%
RE	10	THEME PARK WORLD	BULLFROG	EA	70%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 2000)

WIN THE ENTIRE VIRGIN TOP 10!

PC ZONE and Virgin have teamed up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Top 10. All you have to do to enter the draw is answer this simple question:

QUESTION: Who is the main man behind *Deus Ex*?

Just answer the above question and send it on a postcard, along with all the information requested, to the address below.

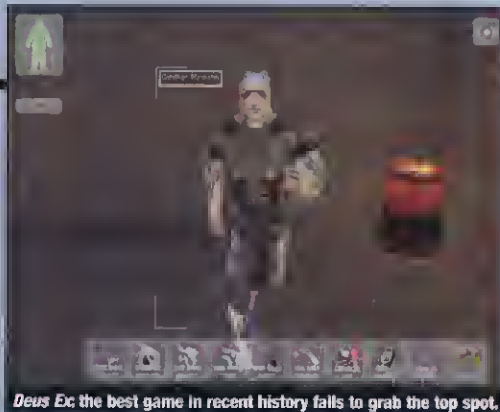
① Name / Address / Postcode / Daytime phone number / Email / Job title / Company name / Age if under 18

② Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies

③ Are you a current subscriber to PC ZONE?

Answers on a postcard to: PC ZONE Chart Compo (CPCZ0011A), Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford BD1 5RZ. Closing date: Wednesday 18 Oct.

④ Terms and conditions: Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Ed's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply.



Deus Ex: the best game in recent history fails to grab the top spot.

CHART COMMENT

BASED ON CHART TRACK TOP 10

The Sims at number one above both *Deus Ex* and *Grand Prix 3*? Channel 4's *Big Brother* has turned this into a nation of control freaks who aren't happy if they're not intruding into the personal lives of a bunch of fools who do nothing all day but eat and fall out. Just like *The Sims*. Elsewhere there's still some old games in there. Has everyone been to Alton Towers for their holidays this year? Nothing else explains why *Rollercoaster Tycoon* and *Theme Park World* are hanging in there. It's sad to see *Deus Ex* losing the top spot. It's so far ahead of its rivals. If you haven't got it yet, get it and show those money-grubbing suits there's more to games than sequels.

Mark Hill

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"Only one FPS in the Top 10! Looks like strategy and simulation games are obviously the top choice for people nowadays. With *Black & White* just around the corner, could we see the end to FPSs as we know them and expect a whole new breed of games? I'm wasting away from boredom."

Famished, London

"It's odd how there seems to be so many tired old games lingering in the charts forever, while the new ones that keep coming out seem to just lurk away. I guess that's just the price you pay for releasing shite games. Still, I'm really surprised that a game as uninspiring and retarded as *The Sims* is still holding out, especially with such a quality game as *Deus Ex* tearing up its arse."

Traitor Blue, somewhere in the South East

"Hmm, *The Sims* appears to be doing a *Bohemian Rhapsody*. Fair enough, as it's a whopping title. But it's a little odd that *AOE II* and *Rollercoaster Tycoon* are still lingering in the charts. They've been in the Top 10 for a combined total of around 27 years now."

Radishinho, Cornwall

"*The Sims* is worthy of top spot. I got it last week and can't put it down. Does anyone have a go at the Rolling Stones for being around for ages? Mick Jagger is starting to look like the Queen Mum. *GP3* is surprisingly low-placed considering it's a Geoff Crammond offering, but it certainly didn't have the hype or even half as much exposure as *GP2*."

Monkey, Manchester

RETRO CHARTS

1 YEAR AGO...

- 1 *Tiberian Sun* (EA)
- 2 *Championship Manager 3* (Eidos)
- 3 *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (Activision)
- 4 *Hidden & Dangerous* (Take 2)
- 5 *FA Premier League STARS* (EA)

2 YEARS AGO...

- 1 *Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines* (Eidos)
- 2 *X-Files: Unrestricted Access* (Fox)
- 3 *World Cup 98* (EA)
- 4 *Premier Manager 98* (Gremlin)
- 5 *Titanic – Adventure out of time* (Europress)

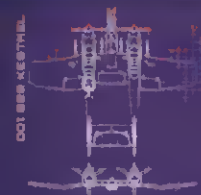
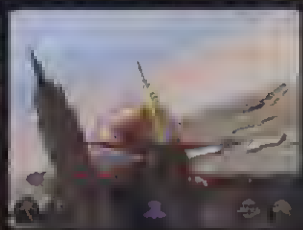
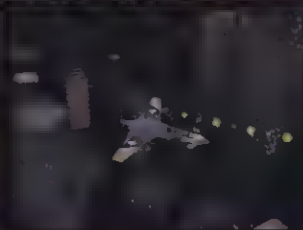
5 YEARS AGO...

- 1 *Star Trek TNG: A Final Unity* (Microprose)
- 2 *Indy Car Racing* (Virgin)
- 3 *Terminal Velocity* (US Gold)
- 4 *Star Wars: Dark Forces* (Virgin)
- 5 *Discworld* (Psygnosis)

CRIMSON SKIES



Out October 13th



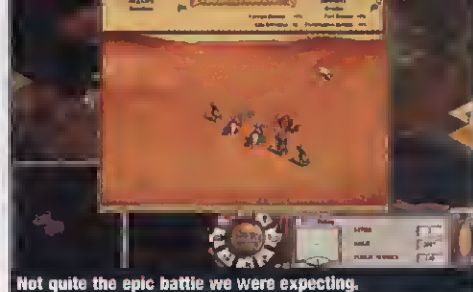
Microsoft

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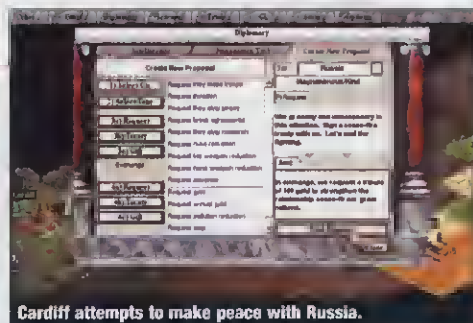
www.crimsonskies.co.uk



It may not look that different but *CPTII* has plenty of new features.



Not quite the epic battle we were expecting.



Cardiff attempts to make peace with Russia.

CALL TO MORE POWER

The Not-Sid Meier's *Civilization* series delivers a sequel

Fans of multi-era global empire creation and civilisation build 'em ups will be dancing in the streets upon hearing that their good friends at Activision have agreed to furnish them with a sequel to *Call To Power* – the only ongoing *Civilization* series guaranteed 100 per cent Sid Meier-free.

CPTII opens up a truckload of new gameplay options, from diplomatic, scientific and economic victory conditions to *Age Of Empires*-style 'wonder' constructions. Ministers and advisors offer advice on pertinent strategies, while mayors and underlings are on hand to perform all those menial and repetitive jobs that get in the way of your megalomaniacal fun.

This time round the game spans some 6,300 years of human development, from primitive beginnings to the science fiction future of 2300AD. All the while

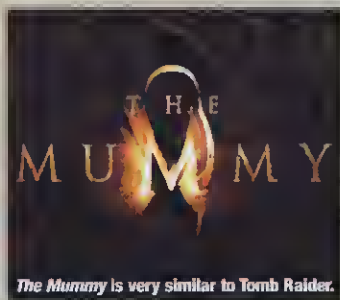
you'll be dealing with an advanced AI engine that mimics differing personality matrices for different situations. This means that the computer acts and thinks like a real human – especially in diplomatic negotiations.

The graphics engine has also been given a slight overhaul. This time cities have a visual impact on their surrounding lands as the player uses up resources and expands ever outwards. Also nation borders are clearly defined to make sure invaders can be clearly spotted and accidental incursions are kept to a minimum.

You'll also be given a full scenario builder, complete with two integrated historical scenarios to play around with, allowing you to provide your *CPTII*-owning friends with plenty of challenges, as will the new play-by-email and hotseat multiplayer options. Expect to see *CPTII* early next year.



Another death-defying visit to the tombs.



The Mummy is very similar to Tomb Raider.

MUMMY REBELLION

Film tie-in no. 3447720-3

Following on from a successful movie tie-in can often be a daunting affair, especially when it's as good a tie-in as Rebellion's *Alien Vs Predator*. That's not stopping the Oxford-based developer from jumping headfirst into a videogame adaptation of *The Mummy*, based on the most recent blockbuster version of the classic monster tale and not, as many of us hoped, an interpretation of slapstick classic *Abbott And Costello Meet The Mummy*. Oh well, you can't have everything.

The game takes the form of a *Tomb Raider*-esque third-person action romp with the added benefit of controlling up to three of the film's main heroes – Brendan Fraser's Indy-like hero Rick, Rachel Weisz's Lara-like Evie and John Hannah's comic relief. Each will have certain unique functions and you'll need to combine all three at times to solve some of the more fiendish puzzles.

The Mummy is being published by Konami and should be out by the end of this year.

ANOTHER BIG BROTHER

By the time you read this, the phenomenon that is Channel 4's *Big Brother* will all be over. No doubt Craig or Anna won the whole thing and Melanie went on to pose nude for *Maxim* or *FHM*, but in case you can't live without it, Inlogames is giving you the chance to go back to the house.

Most of you are probably thinking *The Sims* or some other micro-management affair, guiding the daily lives of the housemates and making sure they don't fail their tasks and their nicotine withdrawal doesn't cause them to go on killing sprees. It's the logical option, but since when has logic ever played a part in the games industry?

Big Brother: The Game is a platform game. Christ alone knows how they hit on this, but you have to jump around five different levels using cartoon versions of the cast, unlocking previously unseen film footage (providing you haven't been glued to the Internet feeds since it started). It all sounds terrible, but you can make your own minds up, as it should be on sale now. Apparently, the Dutch version went in at number one. But what do those dope-smoking hippies know, anyway?



We will be running to the shops to buy this for review, no doubt.

VERY REALISTIC SIMULATION OF A
HUMAN SOCIETY

MORE THAN 300 BUILDINGS IN A DOZEN
INDUSTRIES TO CREATE AND MANAGE

POLITICS ELECTIONS MAYORS MINISTERS
AND PRESIDENTS



EPISODE 1 THE RISE OF TYCOONS

STARPEACE

THE PARALLEL DOMAIN

The Man who KNOWS

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

Soldier Of Fortune has been beset by further controversy following shocking claims that it is racist. The accusation is based on the fact that in later levels of the game it is possible to slaughter innocent Iraqi bystanders without punishment, whereas shooting Americans carries a penalty. The theory was put to Raven co-founder Steve Raffel, who claimed: "During the game, treatment of enemies, civilians and hostages is consistent regardless of nation and nationality. We did not single out any group of people or any nation intentionally." The discrepancy was also pointed out to Dr Amin, head of Iraqi Interests at the Jordanian embassy in London, who shouted: "I think it's not only embarrassing, but racist. It shows the mentality of the American gung-ho. It's reminiscent of the old movies, with the white guy John Wayne always beating the black guys, who were always hoodlums and thieves."

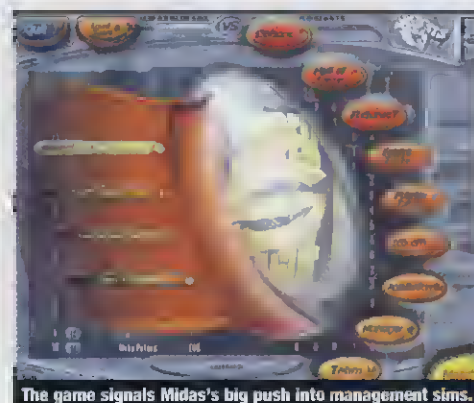
Meanwhile, games have received some rare positive press from an unlikely source. Boffins at NASA have taken a firm stance against the preconception that games turn users into murderous psychopaths, actually claiming that they can have a positive impact. A press release stated: "Recreational video games have the potential to help both children and adults with a variety of health problems from concentration difficulties to physical stress."

Electronic Arts has run into trouble over the title of its Premier League-endorsed *Football Manager 2001*. It is facing action from Prism Leisure, who has suddenly announced that it is the owner of the Football Manager trademark. Apparently, it acquired the goodwill, reputation and business of Addictive Games and its famous *Football Manager* franchise in 1987, and claim EA's forthcoming title is, "identical or confusingly similar to Prism's trademark". Prism has applied for an injunction to stop EA releasing the game, which, in our humble opinion, would ultimately be best for everyone.

Still more gripes about football, Midas Interactive has come under fire from the players of Sheffield United, who claim that their gold and litac away shirt – sponsored by the publisher – makes them look homosexual. According to *The Sun*, an insider said: "The kit makes us look like a bunch of poofers. It's turning us into a laughing stock." Midas MD Paul Hollins hit back, claiming: "The decision about the colour of the away kit was taken after full consultation with the club, and it's a big hit with the fans. People are even wearing them in nightclubs." Well that's Sheffield for you (complaints to the usual address).



We're sure no teams will be wearing Midas-sponsored kits.



The game signals Midas's big push into management sims.

RUGBY LEAGUE IS SUPER

The rugby Super League gets the Midas touch

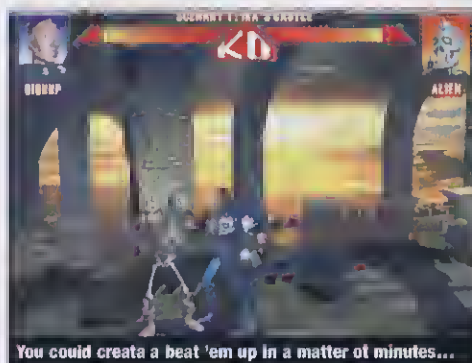
For a sport that gathers crowds to its club matches that are second in size only to football, rugby league is woefully under-exposed in the media and grossly misunderstood by the public. Hopefully, Midas Interactive's *European Super League Rugby Manager* should go some small way to remedy that and do for the sport what *Championship Manager* has done for footy. First indications, however, show that you'll have to manage the club's resources as well as the team's tactics, with the job probably including setting the price of pies. It isn't surprising given that it's much harder to provide

an in-depth recreation of the game's tactics than it is in soccer sims, where every fan considers themselves a manager already. There will be a full transfer system, individual stats for each player (although judging from the screenshots these have yet to be optimised), match statistics, a tactics editor, awards and team histories, so if you're a fan of the sport there's plenty for you to get to grips with. There was a Spectrum rugby league management game way back in the beginning of time, so it's about time we got another one. *European Super League Rugby Manager* should be in the shops in October for the tiny sum of £19.99.

MAKE YOUR OWN GAME

You're always telling us how crap games are and how your ideas are much better. Now you have the chance to prove it. The DIV Games Creator 2000 competition should sort out the loudmouths from those with some actual talent, and you could win yourself a brand new PC. You'll need a copy of the DIV Games Studio program, plus plenty of time and ingenuity. The package has its limitations, of course, so

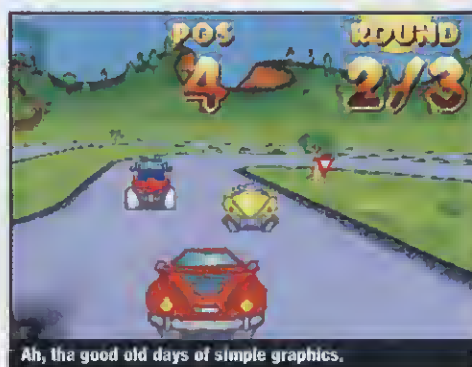
don't expect to be producing the next *Half-Life* beater, but this means originality and playability will be all the more important. There are four categories: overall winner; best use of sound; best use of graphics; and best gameplay. Point your browser to www.div-arena.com for entry details. Entries must be received by October 31 2000, and will be judged by your very own PC ZONE team. Show us your stuff.



You could create a beat 'em up in a matter of minutes...



...but don't expect to win prizes without plenty of effort.



Ah, the good old days of simple graphics.



No, it isn't 3D accelerated. So what?



That'll be Zeus then.



There's a slightly comic look to the thing.

GOD HELP US

It's all Greek to Impressions

Aside from a passing mention in the *Age Of Empires* series, ancient Greece has been largely overlooked in the world of historical city build 'em ups. But now fans of the sandal-wearing, sheep-killing, oracle-worshipping, democracy-creating civilisation will be able to explore its role in history thanks to *Zeus: Master Of Olympus* (formerly known as *Pantheon*) from Impressions, the follow-up to its successful *Caesar III* and *Pharaoh*.

Essentially *SimCity* with togas, *Zeus* has several features that set it apart from the crowd, notably the most advanced city-building system ever made (according to Impressions anyway) and the adventure-based mission structures. You'll be given tasks by the god himself, from building a small settlement out of nearby rocks to recovering the Golden Fleece or conquering a nearby city. All the while you can call on the various Greek gods for help and guidance.

Colonies can be formed to create complex trade routes, monuments and stadiums can be built piece by piece, and you can even host your own Olympic games tournament. *Zeus* is set to be released by Havas some time next year and we'll take a closer look at the game in a few months' time.

BURN IN HELL

Following a deal with Havas Interactive, Universal Interactive Studios has announced that *Spyro The Dragon* – the loveable arsonist lizard that's sent the message to a generation of youngsters that playing with fire is fun – is to appear on the PC. This will be the fourth game to star the pyromaniacal hell-beast, and the first time he'll have put in an appearance on the mature PC platform. *Spyro 4* (working title) will also be popping up on the PS2, the X-Box, GameBoy Advance and even various WAP platforms. Expect to see the him setting things alight sometime in Spring of 2002.

Spyro: cute or what?



TICKER TAPE

STARTS++Not content with having released *Half-Life: Game Of The Year Edition*, Havas will be releasing *Half-Life: Platinum Edition* for the collectors among you. As well as the latest *Team Fortress Classic* and the *Opposing Force* add-on, the pack will also include a collection of fan-created mods. It's nice to see Valve acknowledge the importance of the mod community in this way. We expect *Counter-Strike* will top the bill in that respect. **++STOP++**In more special edition news, *Unreal Tournament* is to receive the Game Of The Year treatment, with a pack that will include 20 new maps and, following *Half-Life's* lead, three user-created mods. These are *Tactical Ops* (the UT version of *Counter-Strike*, previously known as *SWAT*), *Rocket Arena* and *Chaos UT*. **++STOP++**The game previously known as *MOUT: Urban Warfare 2025*, by Ripcord Games, is now to be called *Shrapnel*. **++STOP++**Ritual Entertainment is to release a patch for *Heavy Metal FAKK 2* that will add both clan-based and one-on-one multiplayer competition modes. Isn't that nice of them. **++STOP++**Torus Games has already started work on an add-on pack for *Carmageddon TOR 2000*. However, it wouldn't surprise us if the game flopped and the add-on was canned. Keep an eye on future charts to see how it fares. **++STOP++**A PC version of the PlayStation game *Driver 2* is rumoured to be in the works, although nothing official has been announced. Expect there to be a big gap between the releases. **++STOP++**Microsoft is continuing its acquisitional rampage by buying the recently created Big Huge Games. The main man behind the new development company is none other than Brian Reynolds, a collaborator of Sid Meier's on *Civilization*. **++STOP++**Ubi Soft has taken over Red Storm Entertainment, maker of *Rainbow Six* and *Rogue Spear*. Watch out for new titles being announced in the near future. **++ENOS++**

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

The place to get the latest news on the games that have been delayed



Charlton Heston would never be so late.

PLANET OF THE APES

LAST SEEN: PC ZONE #79

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE: Spring 2000

NEW RELEASE DATE: Late 2001

When *Planet Of The Apes* was first announced, we could hardly contain our excitement at the thought of reliving Charlton Heston's adventures among the self-righteous monkeys. The screenshots showed a good-looking game in progress, so the year-and-a-half slippage looks a bit drastic. According to a Fox spokesperson, there have been problems co-ordinating the project from the States with French developers Visiware. The fact that the game is coming out on some of the new generation consoles could also be partly to blame. And we shouldn't forget that Tim Burton is working on a remake of the original film, starring Mark 'Boogie Nights' Wahlberg, and the manufacturers may want the game to coincide with its theatrical release. Whether it will change its name to *The Visitor*, as the film temporarily has, remains to be seen.

THE LATEST ON...

DOMINION WARS

The *Deep Space Nine* space real-time strategy game has slipped until March 2001. Simon & Schuster hasn't given any other reason apart from the fact that the delay will benefit the game, which suggests it's a bit a rubbish at the moment. Of course, it could also mean that they want to put out an excellent game rather than an average one.



Dominion Wars: in a timewarp.

X-COM: ALLIANCE

The much-anticipated tactical combat *X-COM* game has now been postponed until sometime next year. At this rate, it's going to rival *Daikatana* for sheer lateness. Last time we saw it, the graphics were looking fantastic and the gameplay elements were being finalised, so there must have been problems with some of the finer details. We'll give you more news when we have it.



X-COM: where for art thou?

HOTSHOTS

I'm going in. And I'm not coming out again

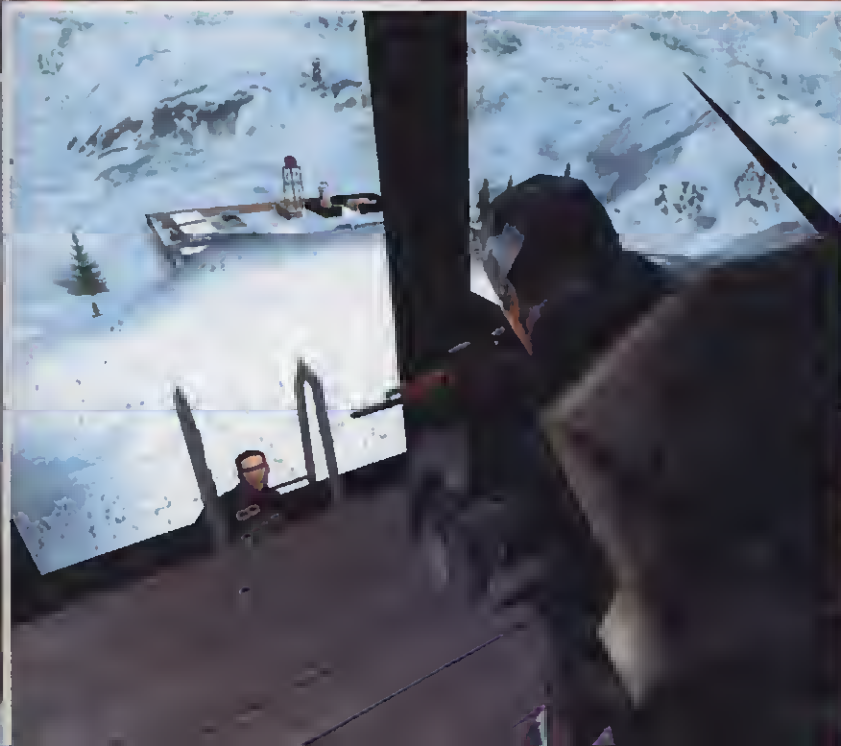


PROJECT IGI

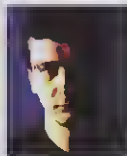
★ Eidos • Out winter

OK, by this stage you know as much as we do about Innerloop's exciting-looking spy 'em up. So instead of rehashing old info in a vain attempt to fill a few hundred words, let's take a look at that name shall we? *Project IGI*. Stupid, isn't it? Now, we know that Innerloop is from Norway, so we could always put it down to the usual oh-so-amusing foreign take on our own Queen's English and pontificate at length in our usual pseudo-racist manner. But it's recently come to light that the IGI part stands for, get this, I'm Going In. Which is grammatically correct. So

that excuse has gone. However, we don't mind this title as much as the previous one as it's kind of exciting and conjures up all sorts of vaguely sexual imagery. We here at ZONE demand similarly expressive naming in our gaming endeavours. *Counter-Strike* would be so much better if it was simply called *Go Go Go*. *Quake III* would become *Eat It, Sucker* and wouldn't everyone be better off if *Vampire: The Masquerade* was known as *Bite A Virgin*? Anyway, here are the latest IGI shots to turn up in the office. Enjoy.



MAILBOX



Violent games, big boxes and someone else who wants to give Lara a kicking. It's all in a day's work

★ ANSWERED BY Dave Woods

CONTACT INFO

Write to us, and if your letter is selected as Letter Of The Month we'll send you a prize.

WRITE TO Mailbox, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk

CHAT FORUM If you've got something pressing to say, check out the 'lively' chat forum on our website. Point your browser at www.pczone.co.uk for further info.

SUPER PRIZES TO BE WON

For the next few issues of PC ZONE, we will be giving away a Microsoft IntelliMouse to everyone who gets a letter printed in Mailbox. These digital rodents are perfect for 3D shooters and games that require a quick and precise response from your pointing device – you can even use them with Windows 98 if you really want to. So get your writing skates on and send us your literary masterpieces. We promise not to be rude when we reply to them. Well, not very.



SAVING GRACE

I love your magazine and get it on the day it comes out every month. I've decided to write to you because I have something I feel I have to get off my chest, namely, saving in computer games, such as *Half-Life*. The problem in *Half-Life* is that you can save a million times and it doesn't matter. You don't have to wait until you finish the level, collect save crystals or even find a typewriter, you just hit F6. This removes some of the pressure of playing first-person shooters, as you no longer have to worry about dying. Don't get me wrong, *Half-Life* changed my life and the mission add-on *Opposing Force* is just as good. A solution for this problem is that in some games you should only be allowed to save a certain number of times through the game. As this is the first time I've written to a games magazine, especially one as fantastic as yours, I was wondering if you could print my letter. Thank you very much for your time.

Chris McBurney

★ When you put it like that, how could we refuse? Our office is actually split down the middle on this issue. In games such as *Half-Life*, death can come instantly and without

warning. If you haven't been able to save for a long period of time, then you have to go back and play the same bit of a game over and over again, which can get frustrating very quickly. You should have seen me playing *Daikatana* and trying to cope with the save crystals. The best compromise we've seen is in *Soldier Of Fortune* where you're given a certain number of saves per mission. Use them up and you have to get to the end without saving again. It works and it brings back some of that pressure you're obviously yearning for.

VIOLENT GAMES #1

The debate about computer games causing real life violence seems very one-sided. The vast majority of children are balanced enough to realise that blowing away characters in games is not the same as real life.

I have played games of every type since the ZX-81 days and I'm not remotely violent. I have seen thousands of fictional deaths in films and on TV, but I don't remember any of those as I know they weren't real. However, I still vividly remember seeing news reports of deaths in South

Africa from decades ago. That was real violence and it was ugly and frightening. If you feel excited about seeing real violence involving people or animals, then you are seriously maladjusted.

Computer games should be exciting and challenging. You may feel frustration or anger if you can't complete a level for the umpteenth time, but that won't make you run outside and go on a killing spree. Children do copy things they see and watching *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* or *Power Rangers* did lead to children karate kicking each other. And if children today play act *Half-Life* or *Quake* in the playground, so what?

“Computer games can cause anger if you can't complete a level, but that won't make you run outside and go on a killing spree”

GAVIN HAY DEFENDS VIOLENT GAMES

They're hardly in danger of turning into Charles Manson. There is a huge gap between fictional violence, whatever media it is shown on, and the brutal violence of reality.

Gavin Hay

VIOLENT GAMES #2

I have read some of the letters in your magazine about game-related violence and I think many games, especially first-person shooters, make people more violent. There are mail order places now where you can purchase air pistols which replicate real guns. For example, the Glock handgun in *Half-Life* can be purchased as a replica air pistol.

It's not that everyone who buys and plays a FPS becomes a bloodthirsty psychopath. It may be just as simple as wanting a replica air pistol of a gun in your favourite game. Let's face facts, though, kids are not

going to keep the air pistol on a shelf for display.

My point is that young kids or teenagers who play these violent computer games are likely to be interested in taking it a step further and owning similar weapons. In these games there is a great deal of fun shooting and killing. This may make some teenagers more violent and try out some of the things they have seen in the game.

Your argument is likely to be, well these games are rated 15-18 and young immature kids are not allowed to play the games. My 11-year-old neighbour has bought games such as

Half-Life, *Soldier Of Fortune* and other violent games and he clearly doesn't look 15, but the stores sell them to him without question.

Greg Taylor

★ Violent games are rated 18 or over so that they don't get into the hands of children. In the same way cigarettes are only supposed to be sold to 16-year-olds and alcohol to 18-year-olds. If a shop breaks the law, then it can be prosecuted. And although we all know it's still going to happen, there's not a lot that we can do about it apart from report any transgressions we hear about. We don't think every game should be sanitised so it's suitable for any age group, just in case it gets into the wrong hands. If this sort of censorship existed across the board, the world would be a pretty miserable place to live in.



Do you ever get the urge to do this for real?

UN-EXTENDED PLAY

I'm a new reader of your magazine. In fact, the issue I'm writing about is only the second one I've bought. There are lots of similar magazines available, so choosing the right one to buy regularly depends on the quality of the first few issues purchased. The reason I bought issue 93 of *PC ZONE* was for the *Homeworld* mods on the accompanying CD.

When I got home I was shocked to find that the *Homeworld* mods were not on the CD. I read the small print at the start of Extended Play and it said, "On this month's cover CD we've got everything mentioned on this page." I checked the CD again and resigned the search with the feeling that I had been tricked into buying your magazine.

As I said before, there is very little to differentiate between the games magazines and an incident like this is enough to put me off buying yours again. Without access to the Internet there is no way of getting the files myself, so I would like to know if you'll be including the mods in a future issue.

Kieran Mooney

★ Extended Play is one of the most popular bits of the magazine, and each issue we try to ensure that everything that we talk about is included on the CD. To do this, we need to

get permission from the authors to include their work, and we also have to make sure that we're not in breach of copyright. Unfortunately, the *Homeworld* mods in issue 93 were based on *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *Battlestar Galactica* and the like, and we weren't able to put them on the disc. We should have pointed this out and apologise for this, but rest assured that we weren't trying to trick you into buying the magazine. Because of copyright issues, we can't put the mods on a future CD, but the Web addresses are on the page so, hopefully, when you get connected, you'll be able to download them yourself.

FEEDBACK

Just a query really. Why doesn't the games industry allow people who have played the games to supply feedback directly? I've looked for ways to comment on *Tomb Raider TLR*, which I've just completed, but there is no way, short of writing to the company address. Most good companies these days rely on customer surveys to improve their products and it seems narrow-minded for game developers to think they know best and don't need this. T4 had stacks of bugs and some of the ways to complete a level were far too obscure without hints or a walkthrough or an insane

appetite for going backwards and forwards, shooting and pushing at anything.

I know other people who share my thoughts. The possibilities for *Tomb Raider* as a game are enormous and sometimes I feel there is a lack of imagination in games and, instead, merely a need to "get it out there" and rely on the familiar name it has. Even so, I'm a *Tomb Raider* fan and have completed every one, and I will still probably buy the next release, despite moaning about it.

Neville Ward

★ Your idea is a good one but, unfortunately, it would be impractical for the developers of a huge game to court public opinion directly. The sheer amount of mail they'd receive would mean that the next instalment would probably never see the light of day.

Developers are genuinely interested in public opinion, though. Occasionally, you can find forums on the game's official Website, which is monitored by a company official. Any decent messages posted will filter back to the people that matter.

The other way to get your point across is to write in to our Feedback section. We know for a fact that developers across the world read our magazine and, if you come up with a good point, then they may well take it on board. [2]



The last revelation? Probably not.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

BOX CLEVER

I read with some amazement the letter sent in by Andrew McMullan (*PCZ* #93). I have been an avid gamer for many years, since the ZX-81, and I can remember when games used to come in a cassette box. That was great. As a kid in my small back bedroom, I had plenty of room for all my games on one shelf.

Then along came the Spectrum and all was well for a while, until a small company by the name of Ultimate Play The Game came along with a game called *Knightlore*. In its beautifully designed and slightly larger cardboard box, it sold by the bucketload. It was a ground-breaking game, but that's not the point. It stood out on the shelves and attracted the casual eye.

Other companies started hiring marketing guys who said, "bigger box equals more sales". We then started seeing games like *Elite* and *Starglider*. OK, these games had big manuals, but virtually every game that followed arrived in boxes of ever-increasing sizes for no apparent reason. The point I'm trying to make is that most of these contained nothing more than a floppy/CD and a small leaflet of instructions. This is complete madness in my opinion.

As for Mr McMullan's argument that they can't fit system specs, manuals, etc onto a DVD box, take a look at the PlayStation. I've got some games with manuals that span more than 40 pages, which still fit easily into the small boxes. And PC system specs are always printed in a small box that would easily fit any size.

Just wait, Mr McMullan, until your collection runs to three figures like mine has. I hope you live in a big house. Unfortunately, the bulk of my collection is now boxed up in the loft, so, personally, I can't wait for the slimline DVD boxes to arrive.

Phil Ducker

★ Then you'll be glad to know that DVD boxes are coming. The first company to embrace the new packaging is Electronic Arts and the first release under the new regime is going to be *Red Alert 2*. We can't wait because we agree with you. Big boxes are a pain and a complete waste of resources and space. The sooner everyone follows suit, the better.



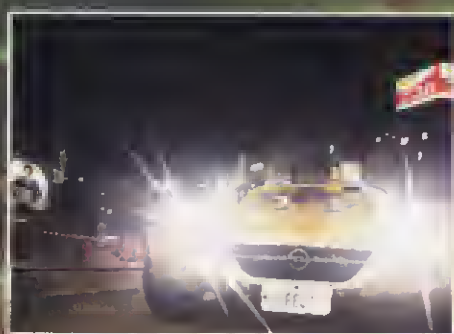
No extra features? Pahl



Where were the mods then? *Homeworld* fans, please accept our humble apology.

'A RACING GAME ON A SCALE NEVER SEEN BEFORE. INCREDIBLE STUFF'
- 9/10 OFFICIAL DREAMCAST MAGAZINE

IT'S NOT HOW FAST YOU DRIVE... IT'S HOW YOU



'WE'RE STARING INTO THE HEADLIGHTS OF A MODERN CLASSIC. RESPECT DUE' - DC:UK
'THIS IS A DREAM' - MAXIM

DRIVE FAST!



MSR[™]
METROPOLIS STREET RACER




Dreamcast

SEGA[™]

Get set to hit your head on the dashboard it's

MIDTOWN MADNESS 2

James Lyon is still trying to get his license and after watching his latest test debacle we decided he was safer off the roads writing this preview

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Angel Studios
PUBLISHER Microsoft
WEBSITE www.angelstudios.com
OUT October

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Two new cities – London and San Francisco
- Improved handling and graphics
- New vehicles
- Crash course mode

CV



ANGEL STUDIOS

Midtown Madness grips the streets again

Just one game for PC, but it's had its hand in console games. Watch out for MM-like *Midnight Club: Street Racing* for PS2.

Despite all that we've said before, we were actually bitterly disappointed with the original *Midtown Madness*. Imagine the looks of disappointment on our faces when we found out that it didn't involve stripping naked, smearing ourselves with our own faeces and running around Trafalgar Square. Instead, what did we get? A free form go-anywhere driving simulator with an emphasis on fun. Tch, some people just don't know how to take a title literally. So we crossed our fingers when we first heard about the sequel and hoped they'd actually do something to correct the grievous errors that permeate the first. And then we saw the game... Unfortunately, it looks like we've got another free form driving simulator and, if we can dig ourselves out of this

large introductory paragraph hole, we can get on with previewing the game.

Microsoft might have stumbled with its initial entries into the games arena. Anyone remember the first *MS Soccer*? Woo-hoo. But, despite these early failings, it's firmly back on track and *MM2* is just one of the gems in its latest release schedule. As you probably know, we were keen on *Midtown Madness* and it seems you were too, voting it Best Driving Game in our Reader Awards by a huge majority. And what do awards make? Sequels, that's what. Angel Studios has got the same thing in mind and is in the process of doing just that – and they aren't going to get away with releasing the same game twice.

TAKE ME BY THE HAND...

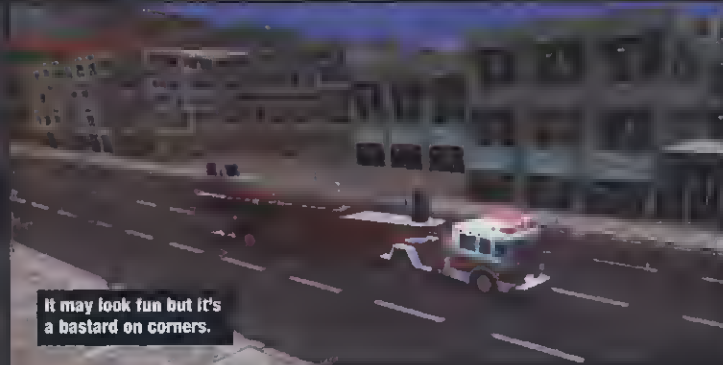
While the first *MM* featured only one city, its sequel now graces us with two new locations, each bigger than

Chicago and far apart from each other in terms of style and looks. First up is San Francisco, and there's really only one reason to set a game in SF: feckin' steep hills all over the shop. Expect the developers to give you every opportunity possible to drive off the top of them at high speed and spend a ridiculous amount of time in the air. Aside from that, SF features all the other things that make it so well-known: the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz and, er, that long steep winding road. OK, I've never actually been there, but unlike Chicago, we've all seen San Francisco glamorised in the movies, and it's certainly recognisable in this way. In fact, talking of movies, with a little bit of map-reading, it should be possible to take on the role of Steve McQueen and recreate that famous car chase route from *Bullitt*. Or, er, Nicolas Cage in *The Rock* if you want.

No prizes for guessing what happens next.



It may look fun but it's a bastard on corners.



is probably why the game
n't being released just now.

There's nothing like
a freeway for a
multiple pile-up.

Steve McQueen, eat
your heart out.

Q&A

JAY PANEK

What do we know about *Midtown Madness 2*, we're just games jourmos. So, to get the real deal we talked to Jay Panek, producer at Angel Studios

PCZ How accurate are the London and San Francisco maps?

JAY When creating the maps for the cities, we used artistic license to create an environment that is both recognisable and playable. We avoided recreating the city exactly, but created a detailed caricature that is tuned to gameplay. In *Midtown 2*, the cities are even more detailed than Chicago was in *Midtown 1*. You'll definitely know where you are in *Midtown 2*.

PCZ How about graphical improvements?

JAY The variety and complexity of the cities has greatly increased. Players wanted more shortcuts, hidden areas and roofs to jump on and we've delivered.

PCZ How many missions/modes are there going to be?

JAY There are 180 race events, plus Cruise mode. There's going to be plenty in *Midtown 2* to keep you hooked.

PCZ Have the vehicles been changed in terms of handling/AI?

JAY The vehicle physics have been enhanced to enable the player to perform reverse 180s, maintain engine power during 180s and power slides. The AI has been enhanced to make the opponents more competitive and the city environments more immersive.

PCZ How about multiplayer improvements?

JAY We learned a lot about the vagaries of performance across the Internet from *Midtown 1*. We've put a lot of work into algorithms that predict where your car should be if your connection starts losing packets. Lag still affects the game, but we've tried to minimise that affect on the players.

PCZ Have you ever shown any signs of madness yourself?

JAY I'm still in this business.

PCZ Do you have any points on your license, and what are they for?

JAY I don't have any. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

PCZ What's your favourite stunt?

JAY One favourite?! Impossible. In San Francisco the hills provide for some insane situations. You can fly over intersections while the traffic below goes about its business. If you hit the backside of Lombard fast enough, you'll leap over the entire street. You can also launch yourself off landmarks and drive on the roofs. Since I'm from Southern California, just racing through the twisted streets of London is fun. In particular, grabbing air off the Tower of London drawbridge and doing some barge hopping as well as doing barrel rolls off the Albert Memorial are among my favourites.

PCZ What's your least fave car and why?

JAY I like all the cars in *Midtown*. We aren't strictly about performance cars. We have many vehicles and each offers a unique driving experience. We have the fast cars, but we also let you get behind the wheel of a double-decker bus and have a go at it.

PCZ What game, apart from your own, are you most looking forward to?

JAY *Black & White*.

PCZ Are you working on anything for the X-Box?

JAY If I told you, I'd have to kill you.

PCZ What are the chances of the game being bug-free and working on all PCs?

JAY If you have the right drivers for your cards, you will have no problems. We've gone to great lengths with Microsoft to address every known issue. There will be some drivers out there that do something wrong and cause a crash, but Microsoft has spared no effort in trying to find them all.

Much closer to home, we have everybody's favourite smog-filled cesspool - ol' London town. This should be more in line with us Brits, none of this American-influenced block planning, instead we've got streets designed by an architect with an Etch-a-sketch and Parkinson's disease. Central London is a mix of winding streets and hidden alleys that make navigating a lot more

atmosphere, but it was abandoned at the last minute in favour of an in-game fog option.

In fact, you can choose from a variety of weather conditions, each looking rather impressive. There's still also the option to control the density of traffic and pedestrians. And they've all had a bit of a makeover in the graphics department, too. It may not be the best looking

"This is more in line with us Brits, none of this American block planning, instead we've got streets designed by an architect with an Etch-a-sketch and Parkinson's disease"

challenging than in San Francisco. All the famous landmarks, from Big Ben to Buckingham Palace have been shoved in, the map covering north to south from Oxford Street to the Thames and east to west from Kensington to Tower Bridge. It's even possible to get down into the tube if you're in need of a traffic-free shortcut. Sadly, people wanting to pay their respects as they drive past the squalid basement known as ZONE Towers will be disappointed to hear that we're not there, being just one street away from inclusion. Don't worry, we've had words.

At first glance, it doesn't look a lot like London. For starters, there's no sign of malformed middle-aged prostitutes smoking crack, gorging themselves on dead rats and talking on their stolen mobile phones. There may be an overabundance of red phone boxes, but at least there's no men in suits and bowler hats selling jellied eels up the apples and pears. There was a rumour that the finished game would come with a free bag of soot which you could smear over your monitor for that essential London

around, but it certainly has a distinctive style and what it lacks in splendour it should more than make up for in play.

TAXI!!!

One of the most interesting additions is the Crash Course feature. In this, you take control of either a cabbie in London or a stunt driver in San Francisco and have to undergo a series of challenges before passing a final exam, which includes tasks such as successfully following a car and trying to get past a number of checkpoints without letting your speed drop below a set minimum. While it's really only an expanded tutorial, it still looks like it's going to be loads of fun.

All vehicles from the first game make a return appearance along with some new ones, each with different paint jobs. Look forward to the likes of the Aston Martin and Audi TT, along with the more novel fire engine and double-decker bus. Of course, the good stuff's locked away at the start and the only way to get your hands on it is by winning races. Again, all the modes from the original are back: the Blitz

THE CONCISE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF MADNESS

As games journalists, we've seen more than our fair share of insanity. So who else is better qualified to bring you some info on the subject? (Probably anyone - a reader)

Straitjacket

Used to restrain the deranged and stop them hurting anybody. Recently considered a failure when it was discovered Paul Daniels could get out of one on his own.

Paranoia

Possibly the only excuse allowed for watching the entire series of *The X-Files*. Or as Kurt Cobain said before he died under dubious circumstances: "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're after you."

Talking to yourself

This is true, the number of people I've heard talking to themselves is quite astonishing. Sadly, the only words I've ever been able to interpret in this incoherent mumbling was the phrase "sausages and chips". I guess the secrets of the universe are safe from me for the time being.

Suggs

Singer with the group Madness. Not mad, at least not until he agreed to host Channel 5's Z-list celebrity karaoke-fest, *Night Fever*. Great career move.



mode where you race against the clock; Checkpoint with you speeding around the city to get to your target before your opponents; and Circuit where, hey, I'll let you guess what you have to do in this one. The Cruise mode also makes a welcome return, allowing you to drive around the cities at your leisure making up your own fun – mainly smashing into anything that moves – or even acting sensibly, driving on the right side of the road and stopping at traffic lights if that's how you get your kicks.

There have also been a few minor improvements to ensure the smooth running of multiplayer over Microsoft's *Gaming Zone*. Games from the first *MM*, such as *Cops And Robbers* should be included, but we're yet to see if there's anything new as the multiplayer option hasn't been finalised yet.

Handling has been given a few tweaks and each vehicle drives markedly different from the others. Suffice to say it feels a lot more responsive, and trying to

manoeuvre an articulated lorry around a corner is going to be a lot more challenging than sliding around with the handbrake on inside a Ford Mustang. Vehicles now have greater damage models, too. Parts of your car should fly off in major collisions and vehicles should flip over at high velocity. They'll still be able to magically right themselves, though.

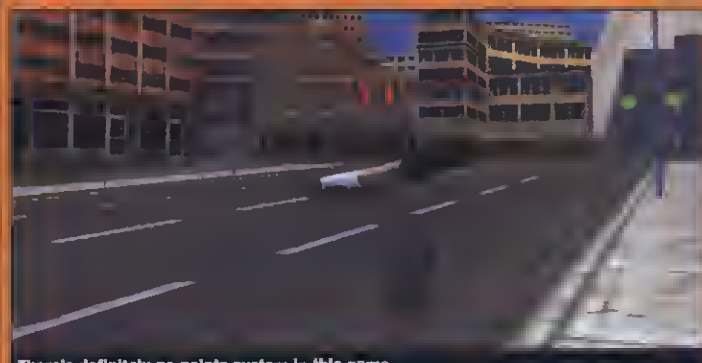
LET'S GO, MR DRIVER!

It seems like everything's been given a polish in time for its impending release. We're not complaining, though – like they say, if it ain't broke... We've been slamming around on a beta version for the past couple of months and, while there's still a few bugs that need to be seen to, we've been able to get a good impression of how the finished game is going to look. Don't expect a radical overhaul, but try to picture an all-new singing and dancing *Midtown Madness* with lots of shiny knobs on it. It's a nice image to leave you with. **PC**

IF YOU CAN'T DRIVE ROUND IT...

There's enough here to satisfy the most uncontrollable psychotics

Aside from vehicles, there will be plenty of other things to knock about in a reckless manner. There should be boxes strewn in every alley, trees in every park, and lamp posts literally everywhere else. Unfortunately, the pedestrians remain as elusive as ever, displaying feats of superhuman athleticism to avoid your oncoming vehicle. If you want to live out your violent fantasies and darkest moments of road rage and knock down a few pedestrians, you're going to have to buy *MM*'s poor relation instead, *Carmageddon TDR 2000*, which we reviewed in the last issue.



There's definitely no points system in this game.



A bus isn't the best thing to enter a race with.



There's stations like this dotted all around London.

Landmarks are surprisingly recognisable. Hell, I'd know the Houses of Parliament anywhere...

Champing at the bit for...

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER: SEASON 00/01

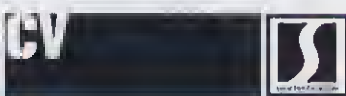
UPDATE

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Sports Interactive
PUBLISHER Eidos
WEBSITE www.sportsinteractive.co.uk
OUT November 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Gaming event of the year
- ★ Ten new leagues
- ★ Live league tables
- ★ Improved staff feedback
- ★ Major media involvement



SPORTS INTERACTIVE

1 *Championship Manager - Lite* would never be the same again.

1993 *CM 93/94* - Fairly self-explanatory

1993 *Guy Roux* - Christ only knows

1994 *CM 94* (Data Disk)

1994 *CM Italia* - Gooooaalaccio!

1995 *CM2* - Introduced a whole new generation of addicts.

1996 *CM 96/97*

1997 *CM 97/98*

1998 *CM3* - Six months late, it broke all records

1999 *CM 99/00* - The game *CM3* should have been

There are few games that divide opinion as fiercely as *Championship Manager*. It's a game you either totally ignore or hopelessly lose your life to. There is no middle ground. Those

who lovingly embrace it appreciate the emphatic attention to detail, the intuitive interface and the believable universe that it creates. But those who fail to grasp its subtleties scoffingly dismiss it as a glorified spreadsheet. They are, of course, wrong. *Championship Manager* is the greatest single reason for owning a PC, and we

are within touching distance of the latest update. In fact, we've been playing the beta version for weeks, or at least those of us in the know have. The rest have probably been chasing trolls around a dark cave.

The annual *Champ Man* update has now become a fixture in the football calendar rivalled only by the start of the actual season. In fact, for many football fans, it provides a welcome respite from the reality of watching

their team's early-season hopes fall apart in the harsh reality of a bleak English winter. By the time *CM 2000* is released in mid-November, many clubs' ambitions will have been shattered on the rock of ineptitude, and the game offers a unique opportunity to enact how it could have been so different.

And that really is the crux of the *Champ Man* phenomenon. In the opinionated world of football supporters, everyone is a self-appointed expert, and *CM* lets you prove just how much of an expert you actually are. One of the game's co-founders, the elder Collyer brother, Paul, concurs: "It is like a world of football. You know football fans like to read Teletext, page 302, or if they've got Sky, 413, Skysports.com, whatever. It's giving people a chance to do that, but to have control over what happens. People love transfer rumours and stuff like that, they love it, they want to pick the team and you have people phoning up Richard Littlejohn or David Mellor and saying: 'The England team should be like this.' We've basically tapped into that enthusiasm."

Enthusiasm is nothing without application, though, and fortunately *Championship Manager* is a miracle of programming and design. As the younger Collyer, Oliver, says: "With *Championship Manager*, we create the football world and then just put the user into it rather than the other games, which build the world around

"We create the football world and then put the user into it rather than creating the world around the user"

OLIVER COLLYER, CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER'S CO-FOUNDER



In the opinionated world of football supporters, everyone's an expert. Backroom staff can now be asked their opinion on squad members, which you can then roundly ignore.

English Premier Division

Table

League Table

Pos	Team	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1st	Arsenal	26	20	2	4	50	17	42	62
2nd	Liverpool	27	16	6	5	46	28	18	54
3rd	Man Utd	27	16	3	8	33	25	8	51
4th	Tottenham	27	15	5	7	37	18	19	50
5th	Chelsea	27	14	0	5	38	22	16	42
6th	Sunderland	27	13	4	10	32	31	1	41
7th	Charlton	27	12	3	12	29	27	2	39
8th	Aston Villa	27	10	6	11	34	39	-5	36
9th	Coventry	26	9	9	8	26	25	1	36
10th	Leeds	27	10	5	12	32	31	1	35
11th	Middlesbrough	27	9	7	11	40	58	-18	34
12th	Derby	27	9	6	12	37	45	-8	33

Take it like a man.

63 Southport 1 Chester 2

Match Overview

Second Half

McNiven 8 Forads 17, 45

That's his hat-trick!!!

Referee: Ricky Smeaton Attendance: 1166 Weather: Dry, 7°C

Now you don't see that every day, or even every year.

Manchester United Tactics

7 David Beckham

Passing

Tackling

Pressing

Pass To

Set Pieces (A)

Set Pieces (D)

Free Role

Forward Runs

Run With Ball

Hold Up Ball

Long Shots

Try Through Balls

Cross Ball

Marking

But does Becks understand basic instructions?

the user. You know that you're on a par with everybody else."

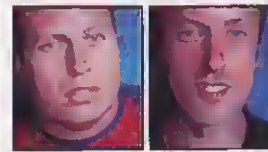
So you're just part of the machine? "Exactly. Without you it would just quite happily carry on, and you're almost insignificant. And that's like real football, isn't it? As a manager you're just part of the big jigsaw. But there's also other peripheral stuff such as the user interface. Even though people generally say it looks like a spreadsheet, it looks really dull and uninteresting, I don't think any of the other games' user interfaces have come near the intuitiveness."

As Paul says: "It's like the Internet, isn't it? You can click on something that interests you. No one says the Internet looks like a spreadsheet, it looks as much like a spreadsheet as CM."

THE DATA DAY

So we've established that it's great, but let's not lose sight of the fact that in real terms this is simply another update. We happily rip into EA Sports for bringing out the same game every six months, so why should CM be reprieved? Admittedly, it's only an annual update, but it's an update

PAUL & OLIVER COLLYER



The Collyer brothers discuss their favourite subject: Everton Football Club

PCZ Nicky Barmby's made a good move, hasn't he?

OLIVER "For Barmby to turn round and say 'I want to play for Liverpool', it is a bit tragic."

OLIVER "I think him and Moullier don't really know what all the fuss is about, but I think they're going to find out in a big way. There's enough nuts in that city for someone to have a go at him."

PCZ What do you think Gazza's going to do for you?

PAUL "Sit on the bench, score a free kick in the last minute against someone crap, make loads of money from the club and then just fuck off quietly at the end of the season. How about that?"

OLIVER "I think it's unlikely that he's going to get anywhere near back to how he was. The optimistic view is it's Walter Smith and he's worked with him before and he's shit-scared of both Smith and Archie Knox, the coach, and there's a slim chance that maybe he will get his shit into place and actually do well. But I think most people will acknowledge that his legs have actually gone."

EVERTON FOR EVER?

The Everton question. Again

PAUL "Are you going to be the 100th person to ask us 'Is the game biased towards Everton?'"

Yes it is. Totally. We're Evertonians, and if we want to bias the game towards Everton, we will."

OLIVER "But you know that's crap, though."

PAUL "It's not biased at all. Honestly, it isn't."

OLIVER "It might have been once."

PAUL "Go and run the game now right, and tell me where we finish. We're really shite."

OLIVER "People just make up this sort of

shit. Basically, the only time it was ever 'biased', and that was unintentional, was CM 97/98 because when we did the data, Everton had Kanchelskis and Limpar and Ferguson and players like that and in real life we finished sixth, but those players were injured a lot of the time. But in the game, they're not injured."

PAUL "What happened was, Ferguson was in prison, Kanchelskis broke his shoulder when Lee Sharpe wrestled him to the ground and missed loads of the season. And obviously when you played it that didn't necessarily happen."

Everton

Position:

Campos, J	Goal	Gerrard, P	Goal
Myhre, T	Goal	Simpson, S	Goal
Cleland, A	Goal	Quinn, R	Goal
Kamark, P	Goal	Pettinger, A	Goal
Plidington, G	Goal	Wright, M	Goal
Watson, S	Goal	Weir, O	Goal
Xavier, A	Goal	Ball, M	Goal
Unsworth, O	Goal	Clarke, P	Goal
Gough, R	Goal	Pedersen, T	Goal
Watson, D	Goal	Ogden, P	Goal
Collins, J	Goal	McCall, S	Goal
Rudolph, P	Goal	McLeod, K	Goal
Pembroke, M	Goal	Lester, J	Goal
McKay, M	Goal	Southern, K	Goal

"Here we go, here we go, here we go, Everton are the team we all know..."

English Premier Division

Table

League Table

Pos	Team	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1st	Aston Villa	27	16	4	7	44	23	21	52
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3rd	Leeds	27	10	8	9	32	31	1	38
4th	Middlesbrough	26	9	7	10	40	50	-10	34
5th	Derby	27	9	6	12	37	45	-8	33
6th	Southampton	27	9	4	14	34	48	-14	31
7th	West Ham	27	8	7	12	29	44	-15	29
8th	Ipswich	27	8	1	18	21	34	-13	25
9th	Bradford	27	6	11	10	34	38	-4	21
10th	Leicester	27	7	7	13	21	29	8	26
11th	Everton	27	7	1	19	23	35	-12	22
12th	Newcastle	27	5	11	11	21	34	-13	16
13th	Man City	27	4	6	17	20	45	-25	14

Looks like they could be telling the truth about Everton - they've slipped a few notches.



MEDIA WHORES

Read all about it

Constant interference by the press can lead to unrest, with mutinies sometimes taking place among the players



That player is rubbish and he knows it.



That infamous temper flares up again - Ferguson is angry and he means business.



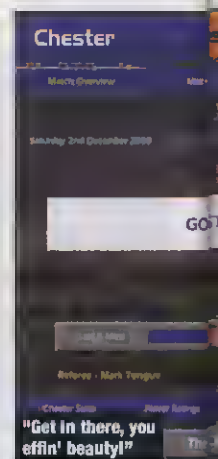
As always, Ferguson relies on the last resort measures: pleading with the press.



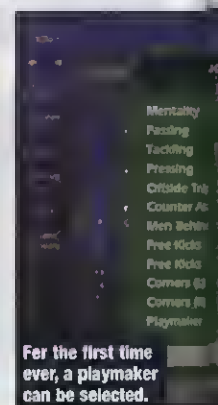
News of injuries and suspensions is now shown before each match.



Interactive Teletext? Absolutely.



"Get in there, you effin' beauty!"



For the first time ever, a playmaker can be selected.

nevertheless. The game has a vast online following and home-made data updates are freely available, not least on PC ZONE's cover disc. So why bring this one out, Paul?

"You bastard! Why bring it out? Because it's going to be better. The first thing is that, if you just edited the players, you'd still be starting in 1999 and that's not much use because it would get messed up anyway. It's another year of adding little bits and making it as perfect as we can. And it's only 20 quid, so it's not like we're taking the piss like FIFA. Both us and Eidos appreciate the fans and realise how much they contribute to the game's success. Because if you piss the fans off, then there's no point."

Oliver agrees: "It's more than just a data update, there are refinements and stuff. And the one big reason is that people actually want it. People are quite happy and tell us that they want to spend, like, 20 quid on this version."

The price is certainly a valid point. Working within the games industry, it's easy to lose sight of the fact that people actually pay good money for this stuff, and being able to buy the best game of the year for half the going rate can only be a good thing.

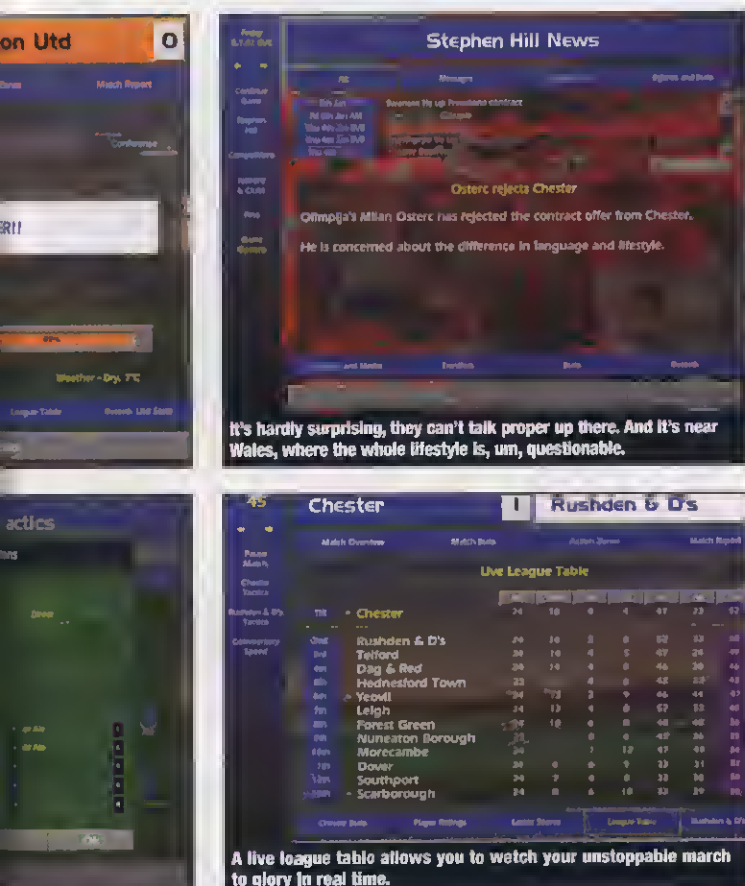
"We do have these long discussions with Eidos," explains Oliver. "And they're pretty receptive to it - where we say we can't price this more than 20 quid, for example - and that's what we've been pushing for. It's good because over the years we've managed to get more power and they do listen to us, and we sort of say to them, you know, charge more than this and you are taking the piss. But, 20 quid, you work out how much time they're going

to spend playing it, generally, and that price is absolutely nothing - completely good value. But it also makes it easy for new people to get into a game if they can go and buy a standalone version for 20 quid, like the latest version of *Championship Manager*. It helps broaden the game to other people. As far as whether somebody should just update the data, there are more features in it."

POPCORN DOUBLE FEATURE

There are certainly more features, and this seems as good a time as any to take a look at them. For starters, it will now be possible to play an astonishing 26 concurrent leagues, ten more than in the last version. As Oliver says: "We've added a whole load of new leagues, some sort of obscure and a bit contentious, others that were blatantly missing from the game." From the top, those new leagues comprise Ireland, Northern Ireland, Wales, Turkey, Greece, Russia, Poland, Croatia, Finland and Australia. The list in itself is impressive enough, but even more so when you consider the research that goes into each league. It's not just a case of having a flick through a foreign edition of *Rothman's*, there is a vast infrastructure of researchers in place. So how, for example, do they go about setting up a Croatian League?

"The first step is to talk to the research co-ordinator," says Oliver, "and he will then look on the database of people who've registered as being a potential researcher. He'll probably come up with about 20 people who have said they would be the Croatian researcher if we do that league. We then get in contact with those people



It's hardly surprising, they can't talk proper up there. And it's near Wales, where the whole lifestyle is, um, questionable.

A live league table allows you to watch your unstoppable march to glory in real time.



It grazes the top of the bar!
Coventry above the V***. What a refreshing change.



“People want this version. And it's only 20 quid, it's not like we're taking the piss like FIFA. We appreciate the fans”

PAUL COLLYER, CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER'S CO-FOUNDER

a head researcher in each country and that person will be in touch with lots of sub-researchers. Ideally we try and get one for every team, so Immanuel in France will hopefully have contact with one person from each French club and then liaise with them. So it's a big structure.”

It certainly is, and one that has drawn interest from the real-life football community, something that the Collyers are currently keeping tight-lipped about.

MORE MORE MORE

Further improvements from last year include even more statistics, such as shots on target and pass completion

ratios. For those either in the hunt for promotion, or haunted by relegation, a live league table can be viewed on match day, enabling you to plot your team's position as the goals fly in. Staff feedback has also been enhanced, and you can now request both coach and physio reports on individual players. Also, managers will be able to approach the Football Association to request the postponement of fixtures, and even to complain about the referee.

A further area that was touched upon in the last version is the involvement of the all-pervasive media. This has been massively expanded upon, and as Oliver says: “It's an area of the game we wanted to simulate, the whole media involvement. And you will find that as you play it

over time you build up a picture of some of your players, which you otherwise wouldn't have been able to work out. It's another feedback that you get.” Negotiations are also in place with actual journalists, and those who agree will have their names used in the game. By way of an example, Paul quips: “Harry Harris from *The Mirror* says Gazza is past it.”

He may well be, but *Championship Manager* certainly isn't. At the time of writing, the 99 version is still riding high in the charts, and it's a safe bet that this version will instantly replace it. If this doesn't go straight in at number one, then Gazza's not an overpaid pie-eater. **CM**



How Tolkien meets *Steampunkin...*

ARCANUM OF STEAMWORKS AND MAGICK OBSCURA

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Troika Games

PUBLISHER Sierra

WEBSITE www.sierrastudios.com/games/arcanum/

OUT February 2001

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- New and original RPG system
- Free-form character types
- Freely mix turn-based and real-time combat
- Fine balance between technological and magical forces

It wouldn't be stretching a point to say that the original *Fallout* game gave the PC RPG scene the kick up the arse it so desperately needed in 1997. The post-apocalyptic plot may not have been anything special, but the graphical approach, ease of play and seamless matching of real-time exploration and turn-based combat was a different matter. These, combined with a unique approach to character development, were more than enough to set the pace for RPGs over the next three years. So a new game from the team that brought about this sea change in PC role-playing has to be something worth more than a glancing look.

The founding trio is Tim Cain, the lead programmer/designer of *Fallout*, and Leonard Boyarsky and Jason

Technology or magic? Which is the adventurer's best friend?

Laurence Scottford reluctantly puts aside his bag of runes to conduct the debate

Anderson, who both worked on the art for the same. Evidently some of the design principles applied to that game have been given even more import in *Arcanum*. Just take a look at the whole character development aspect. Unless you are a die-hard AD&D aficionado, you'll find the lack of coherent character classes a blessing. Just about the only aspects of your character that can be fixed are race and gender. Otherwise specialities are things you

Although the game is superficially set in a standard Tolkien type of fantasy-scape, replete with Dwarves and Halflings, there is something amiss. The world is edging towards an industrial revolution. Somewhere in the middle of a mountain, a dwarvish Clive Sinclair is turning out funny little black boxes with rubber keyboards. Well, maybe not, but there are certainly a few budding George Stephensons

out like a firework on a wet Guy Fawkes night. Understandably, those of a spell-casting disposition are well pissed off.

Engineers, fortunately, aren't getting it all their own way. Otherwise they'd be boring us all night long with unbearably detailed proofs that magic is impossible. No, the tables can be turned and a bit of well-placed magic can often be relied upon to apply the *Tomorrow's World* effect to the most reliable bit of gear – ie botching it up completely.

“A new game from the team that brought about a sea change in PC role-playing has to be worth a look”

gain by performing particular actions within the world to gain experience points and then 'spending' those appropriately on stats and skills. Although there will be some purists who disdain the absence of artificial character types, most players will be glad of the opportunity to develop truly unique characters.

MAGIC'S DISAPPEARING ACT

This brings us neatly on to the central premise of *Arcanum*.

tinkering with steam engines and the like.

The problem is that as technological aptitude grows, it's upsetting the casting of magic. The difficulty is that while magic perverts the course of nature, engineering relies on the physical properties of the natural world to do its stuff, and thereby reinforces them. The net result is that if you try to cast a fireball while in the vicinity of a chaingun, it tends to fizzle

CHOICES, CHOICES

Given that one isn't born into the world as either a magician or a master of firearms, how does this dichotomy affect one's progress in life? Well, it's like this: you have to make a choice and develop your character accordingly. Unfortunately, Peter Snow won't be along with his swing-o-meter to tell you which way the balance is tipping. Of course, you could do the equivalent of voting Lib Dem and try to develop in both the magical and technological arts, but don't blame anybody else when you end up being crap at everything.



Your inventory screen after a raid on the *Antiques Roadshow*.



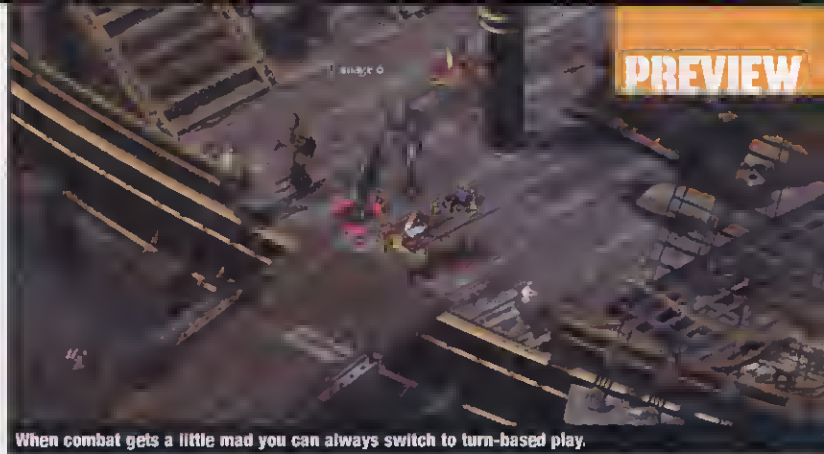
The graphics and scene design are showing great promise at this stage.



The spell effects look set to equal those in Interplay's AD&D line.



Arcanum is not set in your average Tolkienesque fantasy world.



When combat gets a little mad you can always switch to turn-based play.

Arcanum's look and feel is very much all the rage, with the action being viewed from a three-quarter isometric view. From the screen-shots we've seen to date, the spell effects look like they will be, graphically at least, equal of those in *Baldur's Gate* and *PlaneScape: Torment*.

Once again, the action is, in the main, in real-time, but *Arcanum* takes a slightly different approach to combat. Whereas the engine that Bioware created for *Baldur's Gate* and its sequels runs all combat in real-time and allows the player to fudge a turn-based system by introducing a set of conditions under which the game pauses, *Arcanum* offers both real-time and proper turn-based combat.

The main difference between the two combat modes is that in real-time a character's speed, agility and encumbrance literally dictates how fast that character moves during melee, while in the turn-based game these

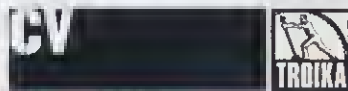
values are translated into movement points. You can switch between the two modes freely. So easy encounters can be run in real-time for speed, while trickier scenarios can be run as turn-based to give you the tactical edge you need.

Perhaps the most significant improvement to the combat system is the use of fatigue. All the characters incur fatigue for performing major actions and then recover it again slowly. When all of a character's fatigue points have been used up that player or NPC falls unconscious. Let's say you've specialised in spell casting and found yourself in a spot of bother with some denizens of the underworld. You might be tempted to fire off endless lightning strikes in succession. All this is going to achieve is to exhaust you mid-battle and then you're going to look pretty stupid when a mad, half-singed Orc comes lumbering your way and you haven't got the energy to run.

MULTI-PLAYER MADNESS

One of the big advantages of Troika signing this game up to Sierra is that gamers will be able to use Won.net to find, set-up and play multi-player games. Of course, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, but at this stage the options for multi-player games are looking pretty comprehensive. You can run any game as a free-for-all, with every man, woman or dwarf for himself, play co-operatively, or opt for a team-based combination of the two. Although in the team-based game you won't win experience points for combat, your team is involved in if you happen to be conveniently behind a tree taking a leak when it all happens.

All in all, *Arcanum* looks like it could be something special. Whether it will be special enough to lure players away from the forthcoming *Baldur's Gate II* is another question. But, from where we're standing, the fight could still go either way. **EW**



TROIKA GAMES

Arcanum will be this team's first independent effort, but as a part of Black Isle Studios/Interplay many of them played significant roles in bringing you...

1997 *Fallout*: At a time when the *Ultima* series was beginning to run out of steam and *Baldur's Gate* was still just a twinkle in Interplay's eye came this refreshing, albeit radiated, breeze into the world of RPGs.

1998 *Fallout 2*: Picking up some years after the conclusion of the events in *Fallout*, this game used pretty much the same engine as its predecessor, but with more of everything. Now overshadowed by Interplay's recent AD&D games, but a cracking RPG nonetheless.

EVERYTHING BUT A THREE-LEGGED RACE...

The racial types in *Arcanum* might be compliant with the ISO specification for RPGs based on Tolkien, but as the conceptual art shows, the unique approach more than makes up for the lack of originality

Humans

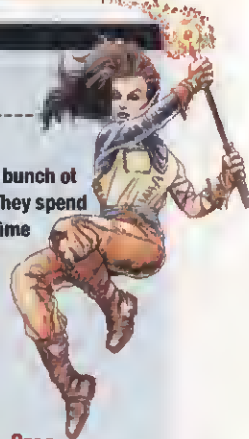
A great race, well, physically at least – taller and smarter than the rest, apart from the Elves, who are pansies.

Gnomes

Let's not have any 'where's your wheelbarrow?' jokes, please. They may be small, but they can turn real nasty

Elves

A right snooty bunch of country folk. They spend most of their time looking down their noses at other races.



Orcs

Although closer to Humans in evolutionary terms than to Gnomes, Orcs are still rarely invited to dinner parties.



Ogres

Even uglier than Chris Evans, these guys tend to get more bad press than the other races. Of course, eating Interviewers doesn't help.

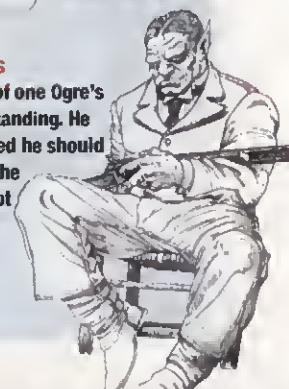
Halfings

The classic little man made good, so beloved of readers of *The Hobbit*. Hey, what's Liam Gallagher doing in this game?



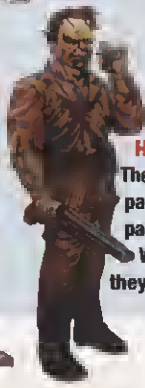
Half-Ogres

The result of one Ogre's misunderstanding. He later realised he should have 'ate' the maiden, not 'date' her.



Half-Orcs

The result of one particularly rowdy dinner party for Orcs and Humans. Which is largely why they're not invited any more.



Dwarves

This is one of the few races without females. Shame really, we've always thought beards looked quite fetching on short women.





Do bears shit in the woods? Quite possibly, but they're not adverse to water either.



Beautiful landscapes are something you'll see a lot of.



He's a good guy - you can tell by his glow.



This handy spell can protect buildings or entire villages.



A very tall zebra. Now you don't see them at the zoo.

Time to go ape...

BLACK & WHITE

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Lionhead Studios
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts/Lionhead Studios
WEBSITE www.lionhead.com
OUT November

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Incredibly complex characters and AI
- ★ Totally non-linear gameplay
- ★ Can be played as an RTS, RPG or good old-fashioned god sim
- ★ A fully interactive environment
- ★ Amazing range of online options

No doubt the big question on your mind is: "Why are we doing yet another preview of *Black & White*?" Fear not. This is not a hype thing and this is not a page-filler. We're doing this because if all goes to plan, this time next month you'll be reading the exclusive *Black & White* review. So, in anticipation of this long-awaited event we thought we'd let you know exactly how things are shaping up at the moment.

Keith Pullin's been following the progress of *Black & White* from the very beginning, and he's still none the wiser. All he knows is that he wants it now

At Lionhead's Guildford HQ there's a palpable sense of urgency and a hint of nervousness. The Molyneux collective are preoccupied with alpha versions, beta versions and god knows what other versions. In short - it's frantic.

"It's totally and completely my life's work; it's the hardest thing I've ever done," groans Molyneux as he grapples with yet another surreal bug on the long journey to completion. On this occasion a giant upright cow, a rotund ape and a perplexed lion - instead of looking straight ahead towards the player - are all being distracted by something happening in the distance behind them. The AI has evolved so much that it's almost as if the creatures are the star actors (the ape could easily pass

for Gérard Depardieu) and they're bored. They've been filming for so long they just want it over and done with. Well, we can understand that. The entire world, it seems, wants this game finished, but not only that, we've been conditioned to expect so much it's almost as if we're destined to be disappointed. Molyneux is understandably apprehensive. "When you look on the fan sites there are people saying things like 'Wow, I can't wait to get *Black & White*! I want to get a leaf and I want to turn it into a tree creature and I want it to rampage around the world...' I mean, how can we ever possibly live up to that?"

The problem is that for one reason or another the gaming public has

been led to believe that this is a game that really will allow them to do whatever they like. Obviously you can't - it's only a game, you have to play within certain parameters and it's something Molyneux wants people to understand. "It was a bold claim to say you can do whatever you like. What I should say is that you can do whatever the interface allows you to do. There are things that come up every single day that have never been anticipated before. Things like, what happens when I build a ring of rocks and put some people inside? Will they starve to death? Will my creature try and help them out? Yes, he will because he's compassionate. There are things like that which are just insanely complex."

RUMOURS

There are now around 150 *Black & White* Websites on the Internet and





There's even a day and night cycle. You name it – this game's got it.



The home of Black & White United?



Villagers gather round to stare in awe at their new saviour.

that's bound to generate hype. Rumours of what the game will hold for the player range from the bizarre to the ridiculous.

The latest rumour is that the villagers will be named after the names in your email address book. Oddly enough this is actually true. Other predictions, such as the rampaging tree monster, are mere figments of severely overactive imaginations. But when it comes to the crunch, Molyneux knows there's only one thing that really matters. "To be quite honest with you my absolute fear is that there's going to be some gameplay flaw in there that totally invalidates it. That is a real fear of mine because as it's such a complex environment, the opportunities and strategies are absolutely infinite."

In reality, the chances are the gameplay will be absolutely spot on

– after all, it's been a trademark feature of Molyneux's games for the last 15 years or so. And besides, this is the man who said that play testing was one of the most important aspects of the entire development process, so surely the testers will be

"The AI has evolved so much that it's as if the creatures are the star actors and they're bored. They've been filming for so long they just want it over and done with"

able to pinpoint any real gameplay balance problems. Won't they?

"I guess so. It's just that there are still a lot of things in the game that are relatively untested – like the football in the multiplayer game. We now have a complete football simulation in there, and the village that wins the football gets this big belief bonus. Well, my village was playing a match and they kept losing

no matter what, and I couldn't work out what was going on. But what was happening was Andy (one of the Lionhead programmers) saw this match and just threw a couple of rocks in there to make sure my side lost. If your people lose they don't

believe in you so much."

Well, Peter Molyneux has never lost yet when it comes to game development, and it would be surprising if he started now. If the play testers do their job and those damn creatures start behaving themselves, we'll hopefully get a little shiny disc that can truly be classed as 21st century entertainment. Fingers crossed for next month then... **EW**

A DREAM COME TRUE

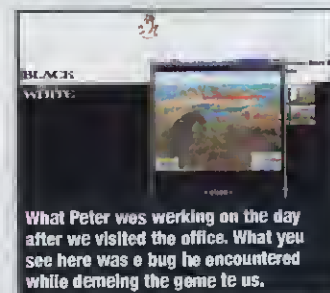
During a recent jolly to Electronic Arts' San Francisco offices we were lucky enough to bump into Molyneux and grab a world-exclusive first play of *Black & White*, and frankly it was more fun than we could have possibly imagined.

Moving around the world is simplicity itself. You either double-click the left mouse button on a certain point on the landscape to instantly zoom to that position, or you drag yourself there by holding the left mouse button and moving the mouse. The right mouse button allows you to pick up and drop objects/people – even jet-lagged morons like us could manage it.

We smashed up houses by throwing rocks into them; we dropped little people off large mountains; and we tied our giant ape to a tree and force-fed him villagers while tickling his nether parts. Essentially we pissed about as much as we possibly could until after 20 minutes of play we were manhandled off the PC and sent packing by a flustered PR person, but it was too late – we were well and truly hooked. The overwhelming joy of being let loose in this enormous virtual playground, where you can do almost anything you want, was too much. We want it all, and we want it now.

LIVE AND DIRECT

On the day we visited the lion's den, the entire office network had just gone live on the Internet. This means that a worldwide audience can now watch each and every programmer's screen as they tweak, adjust and hone the final components of the game. As Molyneux says: "It's our version of *Big Brother*." So if you want to find out for yourself how *Black & White* is coming along as it rushes headlong towards its release date, simply head over to www.bwgame.com/window/ for your own private viewing.



What Peter was working on the day after we visited the office. What you see here was a bug he encountered while deming the game to us.



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Microsoft



The city centre was deserted during the Rome vs England match.



Alcohol smugglers will be given a warm reception by the local police department.



Each of the three nations – Romans, Vikings and Mayas – will have their own unique capabilities.



The improved zoom function will enable you to look at your settlers in even greater detail.



Squad leaders make your troops more powerful in battle.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

SETTLERS IV

Settle down boys and girls, **Martin Korda** is going to tell you all about a new game.

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Blue Byte
PUBLISHER Blue Byte
WEBSITE www.bluebyte.co.uk
OUT November 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Three nations with individual campaigns
- ★ Open ended strategy elements
- ★ Improved combat with squad leaders and mages
- ★ Eight-player online co-operative and versus play
- ★ Enhanced graphics and zoom option

After the success of *Settlers III*, it was always somewhat inevitable that we'd see a fourth installment. Following on from the last game, the story revolves around a character called Morbus and his plant-life hating nation, *The Dark People*, who are banished from their home planet after attempting a revolt against HIM, the highest of all the gods. Their place of exile is earth, so horrendous to Morbus and co, because it has loads of greenery. To make their new home more appealing, Morbus

sends his evil gardener to destroy all of the world's vegetation, and as the leader of one of three nations, it's up to you to stop him. Sounds like corporate globalisation – destroying rainforests for burgers and exploitive third-world sweat shops.

Despite the rather contrived story, Blue Byte is taking plenty of steps to ensure that *Settlers IV* has loads of improvements over its predecessor. As with the previous games, you'll have to build up a colony, ensuring that it has prosperous building and mining industries, as well as adequate food, weapon and tool production. Each one of the three available nations – Romans, Vikings and Mayas – will have their own unique architecture and different production capabilities. They'll also come with separate campaigns, each of which will be fought against the Dark People. However, the actual campaign goals will be different for each nation. Morbus and his gardener will only be defeated when your gardener restores

all of the plant-life they have destroyed. At its most basic, it will come down to a battle of the horticulturalists, although chances of seeing Charlie Dimmock kicking Alan Titchmarsh's head in are, unfortunately, pretty slim.

Far more emphasis is being placed on the game's strategy and trading aspects. Harbours are being expanded, and more types of ships

buildings. Trading is another aspect which is being revamped. You'll be able to trade both inside and outside of your borders, giving proceedings a far more strategic and open-ended feel.

There's nothing here that's going to set the world on fire, but as with other strategy updates, it's the implementation and balance that can make or break the game. Either way it's highly likely that *Settlers IV* will

“Despite the rather contrived story, Blue Byte is taking plenty of steps to ensure that *Settlers IV* has loads of improvements over its predecessor”

will be available than in *SHI*. This will provide you with a far greater scope for both exploring and waging sea battles. On land, you'll be able to recruit squad leaders, who will make your troops more powerful in combat and mages who can cast devastating spells, while those of you who prefer a more covert approach will be able to send saboteurs to take out enemy

sell in droves as the game has always boasted a very loyal following.

The improvements should be more than enough to see old stalwarts reeling with joy. And, with the online options, which enable up to eight people to play either co-operatively or against each other, it could also build up a strong online community. We'll keep you posted. [E]



FIRST ENCOUNTER

LINKS 2001

Keith Pullin swings into the latest *Links* update to find out what's on offer

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Microsoft
PUBLISHER Microsoft
WEBSITE www.microsoft.com/games/links2001/
OUT Late October

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ First *Links* game with a course architect
- ★ Completely revamped physics engine
- ★ Customisable club distances
- ★ Online golf tours with the chance to win US\$100,000

For some, the *Links* series is the only golf series worth having. Generally speaking, it's a franchise that has consistently delivered the goods. But others would disagree, for them it's either Sierra's *PGA Championship Golf*, or EA's *Tiger Woods Golf*. Point is – it's bloody hard to make an impact in the ferociously competitive world of PC golf.

Microsoft's answer is to tempt women into the virtual golfing arena. With LPGA veteran Annika Sorenstam's name and likeness on the *Links 2001* box alongside those of Sergio Garcia and Arnold Palmer, Microsoft is definitely appealing to established *Links* fans as well as an entirely new audience.

"Annika is the perfect addition to the *Links* franchise as women's presence in the golfing and PC golfing world continues to grow," says *Links 2001* product manager, Scott Lee. OK, so a successful female golfer adorning the box is a nice gesture. But the big question is what does *Links 2001* offer in terms of gameplay? The answer is plenty, of course.

An entirely new 3D graphics and physics engine has been developed in an attempt to make the game's six real-life courses, including the now legendary St Andrews Old Course, as

realistic as possible. The terrains available include cliffs, arches and bunker overhangs. Also, objects are now in 1280x1024, meaning background images such as hills, trees and clubhouses should be less blurry or blocky than usual.

When it comes to your actual superstar pros, *Links 2001* has 14 of them all gagging to show you how it's done. There's also the option to create your own left- or right-handed golfers, you can even adjust club distances. As far as the actual swing

"It's bloody hard to make an impact in the ferociously competitive world of PC golf. And Microsoft's answer is to tempt women into the virtual golfing arena"

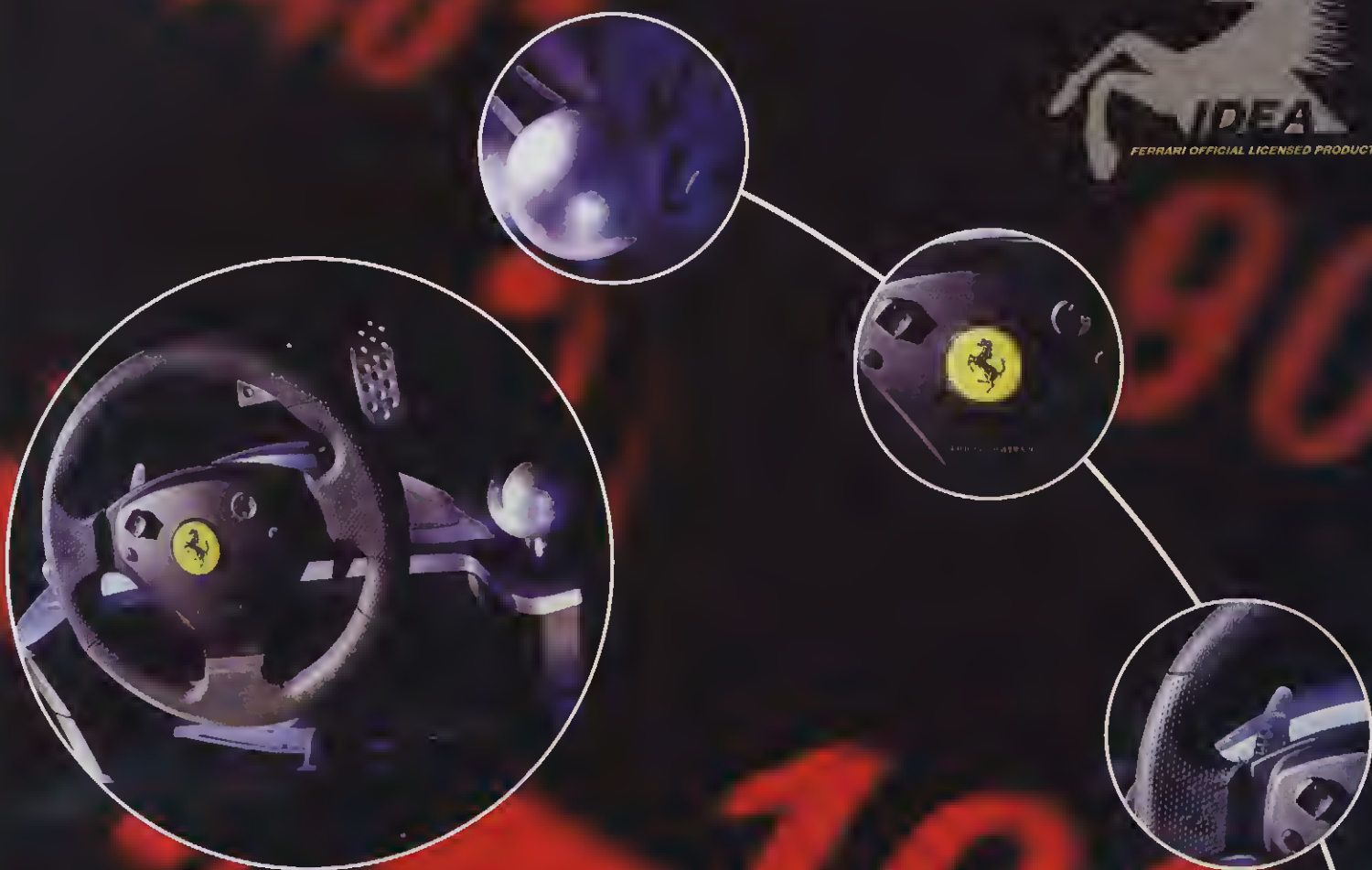
Links 2001 is also the first *Links* game to include a course designer. The Arnold Palmer Course Designer is the actual editor used by the programmers, and from what we've seen it looks set to blow away all other architect tools – you can even create tunnels. How this can be applied on a golf course is another story entirely. But still, it should make for some interesting rounds.

interface goes, it's a standard tri-click or real-time swing method that varies little from *Links 2000*, or anything else around at the moment. But hey, it works, so why change it?

Finally, one of the most interesting features of *Links 2001* has to be the monumental online golf tour that boasts a staggering US\$100,000 jackpot. You never know, it might just cover the phone bill. **PCZ**

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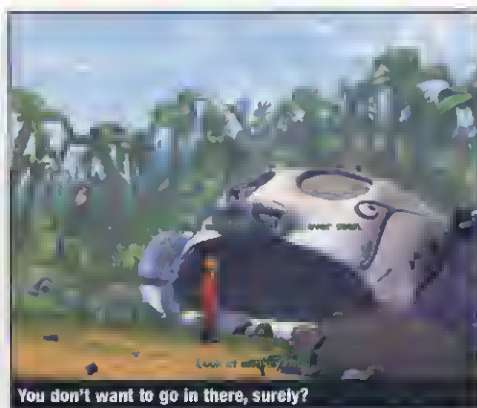
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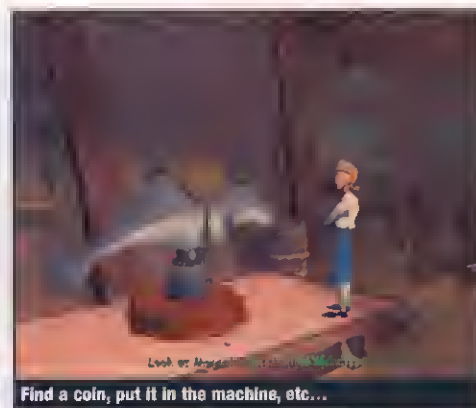
NEEMESIS



It looks great, but is the humour going to be there?



You don't want to go in there, surely?



Find a coin, put it in the machine, etc...



And when we heard there was a Perfect 10 contest going on...



No, um not feckin' Noel Gallagher.

ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND

Paul Presley's always picking fleas from his hair, so he's just the man to give you an insight into the latest simian quest

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER LucasArts
PUBLISHER Activision
WEBSITE www.lucasarts.com
OUT November

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Written by *Sam And Max* authors Michael Stemmle and Sean Clark, *Escape* uses a modified version of the *Grim Fandango* 3D engine.
- ★ The back-to-its-roots storyline with classic characters from the first game
- ★ Insult Fighting makes a return

The number one rule of comedy is that monkeys are funny. Everybody loves monkeys with their cheeky almost human behaviour, their tantrums and uncanny ability to start humping each other like a pair of lust-crazed newly-weds the moment a typically reactionary middle class, *Daily Mail*-reading parent brings his sheltered five-year-old in front of the cage ("Daddy, why's that monkey hurting the other one?"). Not to

FIRST ENCOUNTER

mention their inevitable enslavement of the human race at some point in the far-off future.

So it's odd that after three chapters of a best-selling comedy adventure game in which simians feature prominently in the title, the actual games have, by and large, been a-pe-free. Luckily, for slapstick comedy lovers everywhere, LucasArts is promising plenty of monkey-related fun in the fourth outing for its popular pirate 'em up series, *Escape From Monkey Island*.

Following directly on from the end of *Curse*, *Escape* sees the newly-wedded Guybrush and Elaine returning to their home on Melee

Island. Trouble is she's been declared dead, her home is set for demolition and a mysterious stranger is attempting to take over her position as governor. And thus begins another 'wacky' adventure in which Guybrush lumbers from one series of mishaps to another like some kind of pirate-era Harold Lloyd (ask your parents).

For this fourth stab at the cherry, LucasArts is ditching the tired tried-

To this end, we can expect to see a return to *Monkey Island*'s original roots, with characters from the first game popping up all over the shop. Stan the used-boat salesman is now an estate agent, Meathook and Otis are back for more rat fun, Carla the sword master and the eponymous voodoo lady are both back in business and even Murray the skull returns. No word on the ultra-cool Cannelloni

"We can expect to see a return to *Monkey Island*'s roots, with the original characters popping up all over the place. Whether this return to form pays off is anyone's guess"

and-tested 2D SCUMM engine in favour of an updated version of *Grim Fandango*'s 3D GRIME system. The backgrounds and characters will all be in 3D – a move that's causing some level of concern among long-term fans of the series. Still, providing the storyline's good enough, no one will care in the long run what graphical style is used.

Brothers, but we can only hope.

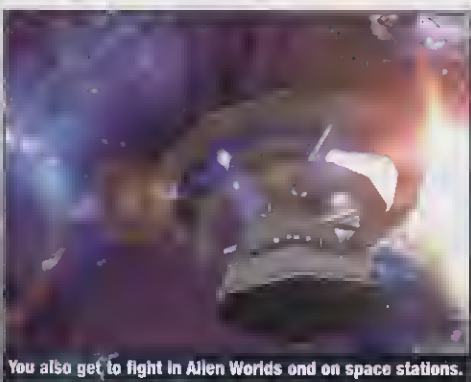
Whether this return to form will pay off is anyone's guess. The pedigree is good enough (*Sam And Max* was one of LucasArts' better adventures of late) and, heaven knows, LucasArts could do with a decent title following their recent *Star Wars* overkill. We'll bring you a more in-depth look in a few months' time. **EW**



A couple of developers have already licensed the Serious 3D engine for their own games.



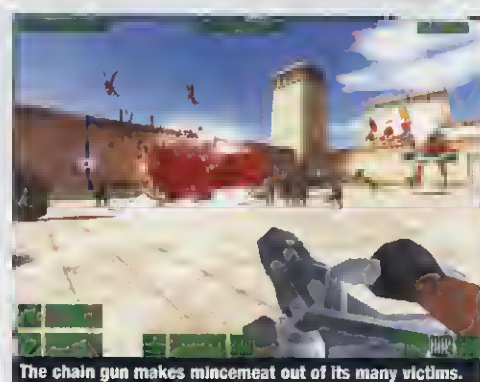
No FPS is complete without a shotgun.



You also get to fight in Alien Worlds and on space stations.



Portals will transport you across huge levels.



The chain gun makes mincemeat out of its many victims.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

SERIOUS SAM

Ash, BJ Blazkowicz, Duke and now 'Serious' Sam Stone. **Richie Shoemaker** profiles gaming's latest hard man

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Croteam
PUBLISHER TBC
WEBSITE www.croteam.com
OUT 2001

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's not very serious
- 3D engine handles cramped indoor and huge outdoor maps easily
- Dozens of enemies on screen at any one time
- Retro pre-*Quake* action – mindless and fun

People are starting to take *Serious Sam* seriously. Before the Croatian developers released an early technology demo a couple of months ago, *Serious Sam* was seen as just another first-person action game starring a ridiculous hero with a similarly preposterous storyline. Since then, however, *Serious Sam* has been hailed in some quarters as the next in line to succeed *Duke Nukem*. Ritual Entertainment's Levelord even went so far as to call

the game "awesome", but then he is American. He also guffed that the game was a "must play for serious first-person shootists. Sheer fun riding on top of a solid engine", (nothing like *Heavy Metal FAKK 2* then). Consequently, publishers have been falling over themselves to muscle in on the first-person action – The Gathering Of Developers/Take 2 are top of the transfer list at the moment, although nothing has been officially announced.

Now before you get the wrong idea, *Serious Sam* is far from being the next *Half-Life*. Going back in time to Ancient Egypt to eliminate an alien menace from the future is hardly the stuff of novels. Our hero 'Serious' Sam Stone is closer to Duke Nukem than Gordon Freeman and the monsters you find yourself up against have more in common with *Doom*'s ancient monstrosities rather than the sleek, sly antics of *Half-Life*'s Black Ops. The headless kamikaze bombers running

around made us chortle, as did the mutant one-eyed Gimps that look like they've been designed by one. There are plenty of other bizarre, ridiculous and faintly scary creatures and to hype up the throwaway fun, the evil entity you find yourself up against is known to his chums as Notorious Mental, a name we find quite endearing.

"The headless kamikaze bombers running around made us chortle as did the mutant one-eyed Gimps that look like they've been designed by one"

Gameplay-wise, *Serious Sam* is a no-brainer. Hordes of enemies come running at you and you simply blow them away. The levels are massive, the outdoor areas vast and the carnage incessant thanks to the fact that the Serious 3D Engine can – in the words of the developers – "allow tons of enemies on screen at any one time", which translates to well over

50 with hundreds of creatures populating any one level. Croteam admits that the colours are garish, but it wants to move away from the gloom of the *Quake* series and create a bright, fun and simple game. In that respect they are on target.

One day soon – though hopefully not too soon – we're all going to get sick of realism in first-person games

such as *Rogue Spear* and *Counter-Strike* and start hankering for the low-brow entertainment that got us by five years ago. If that happens *Serious Sam* may find itself riding a crest of a wave of mindless shooters offering big guns, masses of blood and minimal effort. As it was in the beginning, so it shall be ever more... or something along those lines. **EW**

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combine their
strengths"

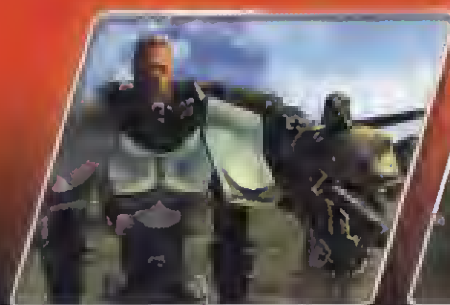
PC GAMING WORLD,
8/2000

"If you think
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is too ponderous,
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PC ZONE, 7/2000

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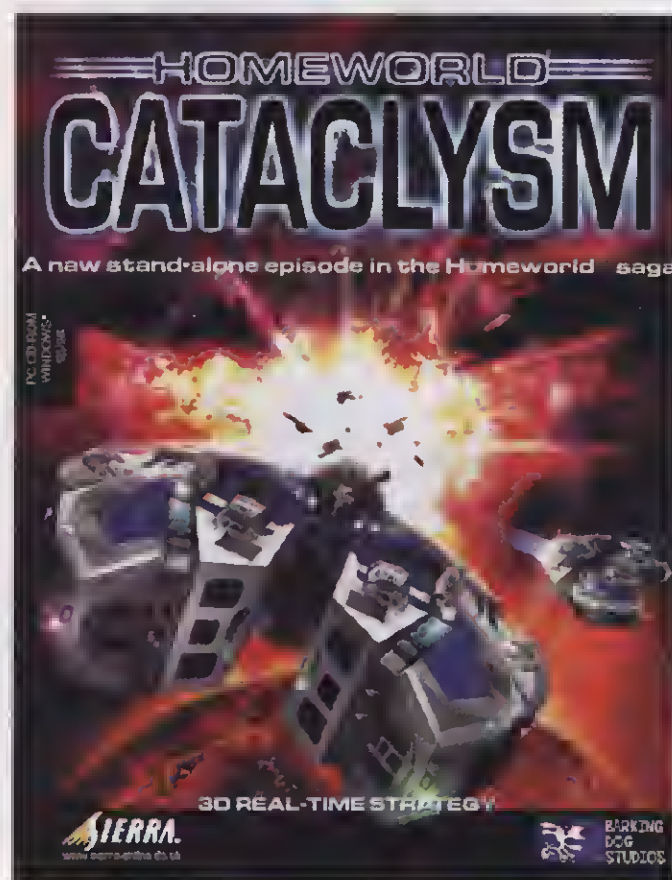
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PC ZONE REVIEWS

Don't spend a single penny until you've checked out the **ZONE** reviews first – we'll tell you which games you've got to buy and which games to avoid

THE PC ZONE GAMES SYSTEM

This is the machine we use to review new titles on. Our reviewers also use older machines to get an impression of gaming in the 'real' world, but this is what we currently consider the best value-for-money set up. As games become more demanding, the specs will change to reflect that

At the heart of the machine is a 600MHz AMD Athlon processor. These babies are seriously scorching, optimised for 3D applications, so first-person shooters fly like you wouldn't believe. Faster Athlons are now available, but at the present prices, this is probably the best value for money. The system bus runs at a godlike speed, so the whole thing is like a supercar with no brake pedal.

Supporting the processor is a MaxiGamer Xentor 32 from Guillemot, purveyors of all things graphic. Based on the TNT2 chipset, these RAM-packed beasts are designed to cope with the polygons, textures and special effects that those game developers insist on chucking at the screen. Guillemot has a new GeForce 256-based card in the offing, which we're hoping to upgrade to soon.

Pionex has supplied the cases and 128Mb of PC100 memory for the motherboard. For gaming, especially with RAM prices as they are at the time of writing, 128Mb is the optimum amount. The cases have room for expansion without taking up excessive space. Nifty floppy slot too...

Hard drive services are provided by the stunning 7,200rpm, 20Gb Maxtor DiamondMax Plus (from the 5120 family

of drives). It's large and fast with room for full installs and quick to load games when you want to play them.

Sound services are supplied by VideoLogic. The SonicVortex 2 card is a PCI device featuring Aureal A3D 2.0, ideal for gamers. The latest drivers are stunning, using the card's own chip to reduce the processing overhead on the CPU when calculating 3D audio. Aureal's API now handles not only sounds themselves, but also their reflections: as you approach a doorway, you can hear sounds from the room reflected into the corridor. Immersive stuff.

VideoLogic also supplies speakers from the superb Sirocco range. We primarily use Crossfires for gaming – they may seem expensive, but you get twice the quality you pay for. Four satellite speakers and a humungous subwoofer give pinpoint accuracy for 3D audio and bass meaty enough for the rumbliest explosions. We also use other speakers from the range (the original Sirocco and new Sirocco Pro) for sound card testing.

Guillemot's DVD Theater setup provides not only the ability to load games quickly, but also to watch DVD movies (essential for reviewing games – not) with its bundled MPEG decoder card.

Peripherals are supplied by Microsoft, from USB mice (top-notch for first-person shooters) to the full force-feedback monty – joysticks and driving wheels – and the ubiquitous SideWinder gamepads.

Last but not least, are headphones from Philips (when the others in the office are suffering from Sirocco overkill) and fabulous 17in Brilliance monitors (107Bs). If you're used to cheap monitors typically bundled with new PCs, the crispness and stability of the image on these comes as quite a shock.

REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

We at **ZONE** pride ourselves on telling you exactly what we think. Our reviewers are the most experienced and talented in the business. They're all experts in their chosen genre, and won't pull any punches – if a game's not worth buying, we'll tell you why. But we don't leave it there. We want to know what you think of the games that come out, which is why we have our Feedback section on page 94. This is where you get the opportunity to put your point of view into **PC ZONE**.



CHECK THE SPECS!

The standard spec machine these days is a P233 with 32Mb of memory – but before a game you need to make sure it will work on your system. Because the tech specs on packaging can be a little optimistic, make sure you check out the We Say bit in our tech specs box. This is where we report on what we think the minimum tech specs should be. If a game runs like a tortoise on the machine listed by the publishers, we'll tell you. All the games reviewed are tested on the minimum-spec PC as quoted on the packaging.

WHERE TO CALL

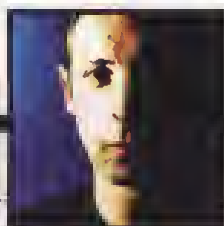
Having trouble finding any of the games listed in the reviews section of the magazine? Here are the numbers you need to call:

Acclaim 020 7344 5000 • Activision 01895 456700 • Anco 01322 292513 • Blue Byte (Germany) 49 0 208 450880 • Codemasters 01926 814132 • Cryo 01926 315552 • Eldos Interactive 020 8636 3000 • Electronic Arts 01932 450000 • Empire Interactive 020 8343 7337 • Europress 01625 856000 • Gremiln Interactive 0114 263 9900 • GT Interactive 020 8222 9700 • Hasbro Interactive 020 8569 1234 • Infogrames 0161 827 8000 • Interplay 020 7551 4222 • Microids (France) 00 33 146 01 54 01 • Microsoft 0345 002 000 • Mattel 01444 246333 • NovaLogic 020 7405 1777 • Rage Software 0151 237 2200 • Take 2 Interactive 01753 854 444 • THQ 01483 767656 • Ubi Soft 020 8944 9000 • Zabloc 01626 332233

MEET THE TEAM

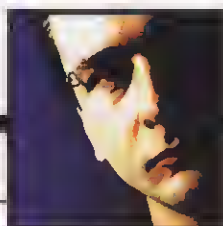
All **PC ZONE**'s reviewers are experts in their field. We like to give every game that comes in for review the best chance, which is why we give it to a fan of the genre

What's the best thing about being a glant?



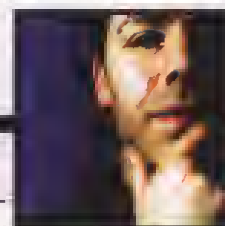
CHRIS ANDERSON
GENRE RPG, adventure, strategy
CURRENTLY PLAYING *EverQuest: The Ruins of Kunark*

I could tread on loads of Men Utd fans.



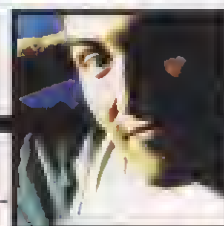
DAVE WOODS
GENRE FPS, RPG, arcade
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force*

I could stamp on the Dennis Interactive football team, who beat us 9-2.



RICHIE SHOEMAKER
GENRE RTS, space combat
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Red Alert 2* and *Counter-Strike*

Having a fantastically large appendage (unfortunately, there would be nowhere to put it).



MARK HILL
GENRE Adventure, RPG, turn-based
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Champ Manager Beta 00/01*

I'd be able to date taller girls.

SCORE DRAW

★ **REVIEWS EDITOR** Dave Woods



We get a lot of feedback from you about our scoring system, and thankfully most of it seems fairly positive. However, every now and again, we get a letter from a seriously hacked-off reader claiming we've done the world an injustice by seriously under/over scoring a certain game. The truth is that we're never going to agree on everything. Read this month's Supertest and you'll find that most of us were left cold by *Diablo II*. In the midst of this negative onslaught one person had the guts to stand up and proclaim his undying love for the title. He got shouted down, of course, and rightly so, but it proves that if you put a roomful of gamers together, an argument is almost inevitable.

What we try and do, and I think we get it right more than 99 per cent of the time (which puts us at the top of our own Top 100 and in line for our very own classic rating) is to give every review to a fan of the genre. You can't review a game in isolation and score it accurately. Take the FPS genre. I've played every game out there, so I know that *Kiss Psycho Circus*, as fun as it is, doesn't deserve to be in the same bracket as *Half-Life* or *Quake III*. Give it to someone whose last interaction with a game was in 1979 and he'll be blown away. You need a reference point.

And remember, when we do score a game differently to you, we want to know about it. We're not so far up our own orifices that we don't acknowledge a difference of opinion, even if we're right and you're wrong. Write to us and let us know.

This month, Richie is back on the RTS trail with Westwood's latest, *Red Alert 2*. Does he get it right? Keith Pullin jetted over to America to bring you the world's first review of, *Giants*. We've also given completely correct scores to *Age Of Empires II: The Conquerors Expansion*, *Heavy Metal: FAKK 2*, *V-Rally 2* and *Deep Fighter*. We're good like that.

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

90-100% Here at **ZONE** we score every game out of 100. If a game receives the impressive score of 90 or above, it is awarded the **PC ZONE Classic** award. These games are original, innovative, compelling and are worth buying even if you're not really a fan of the genre.



80-89% Games that score 80-89 get the **PC ZONE Award For Excellence**. These are excellent examples of their type of game and if you're a fan of the genre you should definitely consider buying the title.



70-79% Any games scoring between 70-79 have just missed an Award For Excellence, but don't ignore them. The score is well above average and that means you're getting a great title that's worth the investment if you're a fan of the genre.

50-69% Games that score in this region don't win any awards, but they're above average and well worth a look. If you're not a fan of the genre though, they will probably offer limited long-term appeal.

20-49% These games are below average and you should really only consider parting with your cash if you're a big fan of the series or genre, or if you happen to see them at a reduced price.

0-19% Games that score less than 20 should be avoided. They offer little in the way of long-term appeal, can be frustrating and definitely aren't much fun. If a game is seriously bugged, then it will also fall into this category. You have been warned.



REVIEWS CONTENTS



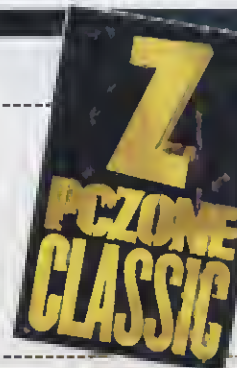
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IT'S A TOUGH CALL...

Under the **ZONE** scoring system, new games will have to be pretty spectacular to receive this award. They will have to take their genre to unprecedented new heights, and represent a major step forward for PC gaming. There are now very few titles that can justifiably be described

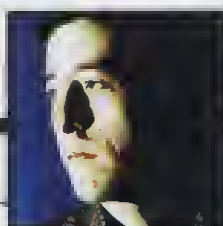
as **PC ZONE Classics**. This trend will continue across all genres. Generally speaking, all **ZONE Classics** are must-have titles (the benchmark title being the definitive game of the genre), but that does not mean you should discount games that score 80+ per cent. These games receive the **PC**

ZONE Award For Excellence and are essential buys if you are a fan of the genre the game fits into. Classics, on the other hand, are games we think will appeal to everyone and will bring new fans to that particular genre. There will not be many of them. When we say a game is a Classic, we mean it!



MARTIN KOROÄ
GENRE Strategy, space combat
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Shogun: Total War*

Everyone looks up to you.



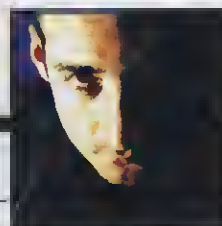
PAUL MALLINSON
GENRE Action, RPG, turn-based
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Elite Force* and *Kiss Psycho Circus*

You never have to go upstairs.



PAUL PRESLEY
GENRE FPS, action/adventure
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Deus Ex*

Size 258 shoes.



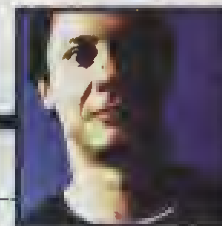
KEITH PULLIN
GENRE Adventure/ RTS
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Giants*.

Having a massive cochlea.



JAMES LYON
GENRE Action/adventure
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Baldur's Gate*

I could get a better grip on my beanstalk.



STEVE HILL
GENRE Football, racing
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Champ Manager Beta 00/01*

You can piss on people's heads.

GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO

★ £39.99 • Digital Mayhem/Interplay • Out November

Enormous cock-up, or giant hit? *Citizen Pullin* is here with the verdict

Every now and then a title comes along that almost defies explanation. This is one such game. On the surface it's just a straightforward third-person-perspective shooter. On another level it's a complex, multiplayer real-time strategy game. And somewhere else along the line it turns into a role-playing game. And just to top it off there's a dash of *WWF* thrown in. In short, it transcends boundaries like no other game we've seen. What's more, we can't get enough of it.

That's right, after a wait of more than two long and drawn-out years, *Giants: Citizen Kabuto* has finally arrived in the office and for once we're not

**PCZONE
AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE**

disappointed. Kabuto himself has to be one of the coolest gaming personalities to ever grace the PC. He is the epitome of all that is violent in video entertainment: he sticks Marines on his horns and stores them for a snack; he rips other creatures to pieces with his bare hands; and he just pops living morsels into his mouth like peanuts. The big guy truly is a class act. But more on that later, right now we need to get back to basics.

If you're not aware of the plot, here's a

quick run-down. The giant Kabuto is created by a race of naked, underwater nymphets, the Sea Reapers, and ordered to defend them from possible, yet very improbable, alien attack. Kabuto is not impressed – he doesn't know where he came from and he doesn't understand why he is this huge monstrosity. He feels lonely all the way up there and he longs for a mate, and so he gets angry, very angry indeed. He turns on his female creators and virtually wipes them out. The remaining Reapers flee to the depths of the ocean to concoct new twisted ways to save their fishy skins.

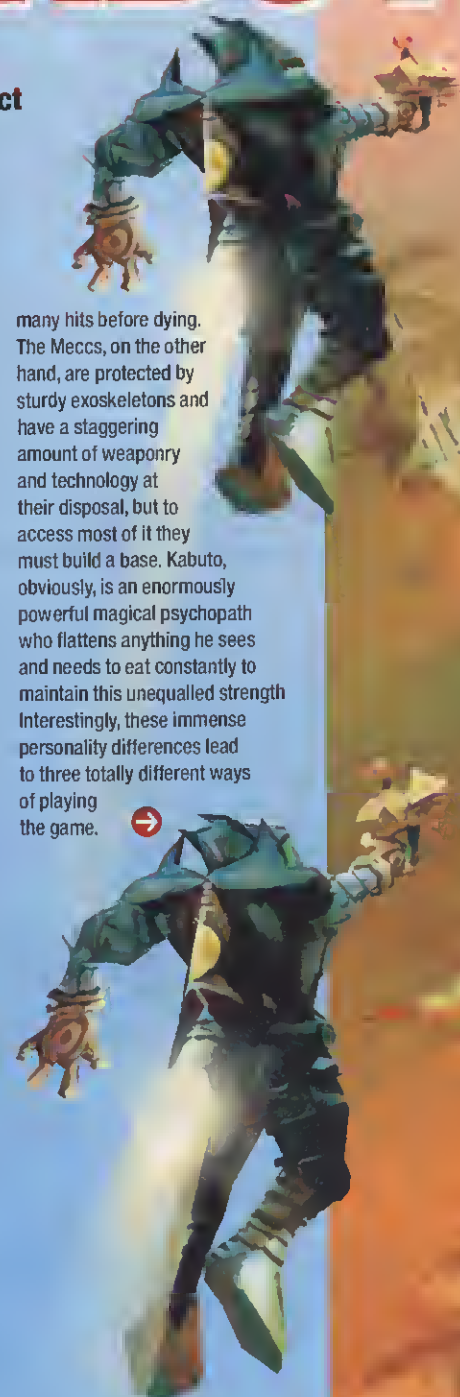
The story may be in a contemporary form, but it's a classic tale – it's *Frankenstein* for a digital age. The folly of messing with science and perverting nature is the theme, and in Kabuto we have the perfect anti-hero.

That's the easy part out of the way, here's how *Giants* actually works.

ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL

You control three different characters: a disenchanted Sea Reaper called Delphi; the Meccaryns, a band of cockney space Marines who have crash-landed on the planet; and the lovely Kabuto.

Each character has strengths and weaknesses. Delphi, for example, can learn up to 13 magic spells. Unfortunately, her nakedness means that physically she's quite weak and can't take





The giant Kabuto is created by a race of naked, underwater nymphets known as the Sea Reapers, and is ordered to protect them from alien attack. But he turns on his creators



The big man seems happier now he's got some friends to play with.

← Fighting your way across the island as Delphi is fast-paced, stirring stuff. She carries a magical bow (complete with a zoom option) that fires everything from flame to homing arrows. Her spells include the ability to slow time (so she can dodge bullets, *Matrix*-style), shrink any creature (including Kabuto) to the size of a mouse, create a tornado and call up a wall of fire. For close encounters, she has a sword that can kill most minor enemies in a flash. She's a tearful lass and there's a definite mystical appeal about playing her. Oh, and you get to see her breasts. But that's not important, of course.

Playing as the Meccs is, again, action-orientated but there's the added strategy of using the jetpack to thrust around the

“The story may be in contemporary form, but it’s a classic tale – it’s *Frankenstein* for the digital age. And Kabuto is the perfect anti-hero”



“Aaaargh! Let go of me you big brute!”



This Sonak creature shoots powerful sound waves that flatten the ground.



These maggot-type creatures are known as cleaners. They eat any corpses that just so happen to be lying around.



Delphi tries out just one of her many destructive spells.

landscape and having to command the four other Meccs in the team. Issuing them with basic orders, such as “take cover” and “attack” is all that it takes in that respect, although there are times when for some reason the AI gets a bit twitchy. They also tend to zoom around in peculiar patterns and are not averse to bumping into a mountain or two. Annoyingly, they also look very similar to some of your enemies, so you can end up shooting your own men by mistake. They can’t actually be hurt but you can still end up wasting valuable ammunition.

That aside, playing as the Meccs is still an interesting experience, especially when you’ve got delights such as mines, grenades, machine guns, RPGs, sniper rifles, homing missiles and more at your disposal.

Playing Kabuto, on the other hand, is an all-out gorefest. His body is his only weapon. With his colossal size, casualties simply can’t be avoided and, in true *Carnageddon* style, you find yourself killing and maiming without even realising it. Special moves are acquired as the game goes on and include the elbow-drop, fist-slam and the lethal butt-stomp. There’s even the



Kabuto is tough, but here a Mecc shows that he is not completely indestructible.

added bonus of viewing the action through a mouth-cam. Assuming the role of Kabuto is literally a devastating experience; controlling him is confirmation that he is, without doubt, the star of the show.

Here's the twist, though: you never actually get to choose which of these characters you want to control. Instead, the game automatically selects one for you when the plot necessitates it. One moment you could be fighting Kabuto and then on the next mission you could be controlling him. It's a restrictive way of doing things that might not appeal to everyone, but it's still an idea that manages to instill a compelling desire to finish the stage in order to see who you are going to play as next. Ultimately, there are 15 missions per character so things even themselves out in the end.

ONLY SMARTIES HAVE THE ANSWER

Despite their obvious differences, the aforementioned characters have something very important in common: they all need two vital resources to survive. The first resource is Smarties: an intelligent yet harmless race of small blue creatures. The second is Vimps: gentle bovine-like creatures bred solely for food. While all three of the main characters rely on these resources, they don't necessarily use them in the same way. Where Kabuto and the Sea Reapers need to kill the Smarties to utilise their powerful mana, the Meccs simply put them to work as slaves to help build their base. The Vimps, meanwhile, are important to Kabuto and the Meccs as a basic food supply. However, for the Sea Reapers these strange two-legged cows increase spell power.

Smarties also happen to be the lynchpin of the whole story.

Yan, the wise old Smartie sage, is the guy who Oelphi learns her spells from. In fact, in all the early missions these little blue Smurfy things help you along, familiarising you with the world you're in and teaching you how to use your equipment. On one mission near the start, the Meccs have to rescue a Smartie who has been kidnapped by some Sea Reaper henchmen. Once you've rescued him, he rewards you with a sniper rifle and sends you packing on another mission to rescue his son. One female Smartie even manages to get a shag out of a Meccaryn called Reg – they really do like to get involved.

They also act as comic relief providing funny accents, silly names and ridiculous predicaments. At times the humour gets a bit stupid, especially during the numerous slapstick cut-scenes at the end of each sub-mission. Still, this is something that should be expected from Planet Moon, after all, this is the developer that broke away from Shiny Entertainment, and whether they like it or not, a lot of Shiny's warped sense of

humour is still evident. Take the Meccaryns, for example. They only arrived on this world after they were eaten and then spat out by a giant space fish. Now that's just plain old weird.

JACK OF ALL TRADES, MASTER OF NONE?

The RTS section of *Giants* is slightly easier to digest. On later missions both Oelphi and the Meccs can build bases. This gives them new technology and better spells or weapons. All they have to do is take a Smartie back to their base and then assign it to work on a particular building. At this point the view tips into overhead mode so that you can work more easily. In this manner Oelphi can create wonders such as sea monsters and submarines, and the Meccs can fly around in nifty little helicopters. The chopper in particular is a versatile machine allowing you to travel the immense landscape faster. It also allows you to strafe enemies from the sky. This means you can slice your enemies into tiny pieces if you fly close enough to the ground. Buzzing a herd of Vimps,



The view through the mouth-cam – pretty, isn't it?

FE FI FO FUM...

Like our friend Kabuto, giants generally get a bad rap. It's a shame really because most of the time it isn't even their fault

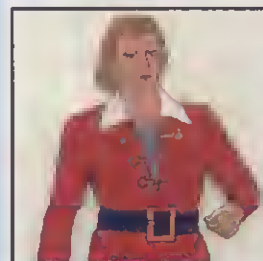
Some mad scientist weirdo usually creates them without even knowing why. On other occasions, they could be minding their own business when a bunch of little people come along and try to take them away. As homage to giganism, we list some of the other giants who, over the years, have been sadly misunderstood...



KING KONG

The most famous ape of them all got a shocking deal. There he was happily munching bananas and spanking his monkey on his own private tropical island when suddenly along come some mad scientists who tranquilise him, capture him, take him to America and kill him. Giant persecution?

Definitely. Although, he did get to meet Fay Wray.



GULLIVER

Poor normal-sized Gulliver went for a quick trip in his boat and ended up being tied up on a beach and accused of being a giant. He tried to be civil with the little people buzzing around him, but to no avail. They were only interested in using his colossal size to attack their neighbours across the sea. Giant manipulation? Oh yes.



ALICE

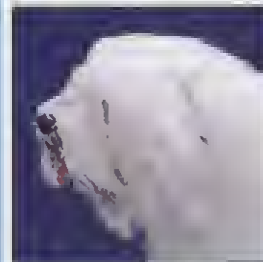
Alice's desire to experiment with hardcore drugs put her in a bit of a predicament. Being burnt alive simply for being too big for a house is a little harsh, especially as she only went to Wonderland because her parents never gave her enough attention. It's a classic case of seeking solace in escapism. Giant misunderstanding? Of course.



JOLLY GREEN GIANT

Using a giant in an advertising campaign for canned sweetcorn is clearly evil. He never wanted to live a charade like that, but men in suits forced him to. This TV legend was even based on the giant in *Jack And The Beanstalk*. Magic beans. Corn. See, it's all

starting to make sense now, isn't it? Corporate giant? Big sales.



DIGBY (The Biggest Dog In The World)

He's Digby, he's beautiful and he got bigger and bigger and bigger. Again it wasn't his fault, somebody spiked his milk and he turned into an enormous walking furball overnight. Obviously this is no reason to get the army and a

tew howitzers on to him. Giant Oog? Hot dog.

For example, scaffers big fleshy lumps of Vimp meat everywhere. There are limits, though – trying the same trick on Kabuto should definitely not be attempted.

Another excellent move on the helicopter is to assign a Mecc to each wing and use them as gunners. You can even do this in LAN or Internet multiplayer mode.

Kabuto is the only character that doesn't have a base, but he's still got a few tricks up his hairy sleeve. For one, he eats enough Smarties he can pop an egg out of his arse. Curiously, this egg hatches into a kind of demonic helper who can run around and perform basic tasks such as collecting meat and Smarties. Kabuto can produce five of these at any one time and they can all be controlled in a similar way to the Mecc 'wingmen'.

FOREVER FRIENDS

The RTS element to the single-player game is clearly an inspired touch that adds a significant novelty factor to the gameplay. In the multiplayer game, however, RTS is less of a novelty and much more of a necessity.

Matches take place between two sides. Any of the main three races can be chosen, and battles

serious about – they want it to be as enjoyable as the single-player game and they look like they may well have done it.

X MARKS THE SPOT

The detail of *Giants* is unbelievable. You only have to look at the rippling of the ocean and the swaying of the trees to know that this is an engine with some serious balls. Everything looks sublime, and sometimes the majestic beauty of the landscapes themselves leads you to think that this is the only game in the world that looks similar to *Black & White*. And if you think Kabuto looks good as a still screenshot, wait until you see him moving or, even better, roaring.

Care doesn't stop there though. Mark Morgan, who works on some of the *The X-Files* music, has written the exclusive soundtrack to the game. It may sound like incidental *Star Wars* music at times, but there's no doubt that it puts atmosphere in all the right places.

Sound effects and speech have also been developed with the utmost care and precision. Only recently Planet Moon threw a load of professional voice artists into a sound studio and got them

“The detail of *Giants* is unbelievable. You only have to look at the rippling of the ocean and the swaying of the trees – it's sublime”

can even occur between two sides of the same race. The exception is Kabuto, he flatly refuses to tight himself and so duels only with the other two races. The Meccs can have a maximum of five players on their team, the Sea Reapers can have three and Kabuto, obviously, is by himself.

The idea is to collect Smarties faster than your opponent to make more powerful weapons to kill them with. But there are also a lot of other tactics. One of these is that you can nick Smarties out of the enemy base and take them back to your own. Other strategies include stealing all the food resources so that the other team starves to death. This is extremely effective when your opponent is Kabuto, because as soon as you remove his nourishment he is almost powerless.

From what we've experienced so far, the multiplayer game is perfectly balanced with no race seemingly having a huge advantage over the other. Overall, the multiplayer aspect to *Giants* is something Planet Moon is clearly

to talk gibberish for several hours. The resulting ad-libbing between the actors was so good nearly all the recorded material was used.

The only other thing worth mentioning is that this is a very tough game, especially on the Meccaryn missions. Every weapon has limited ammo and much of your time is spent looking for the Giff Shop, found somewhere on each mission. Here you can pick up tree ammo refills and extra gadgets such as shields and stealth-bushes. But continuously running backwards and forwards between battle and shop is not everyone's idea of enthralling gameplay. If you think we're being picky, we are, that's our job. The fact is *Giants* is predominantly an action game and repetitive gameplay like this detracts from the overall fluidity.

We won't hold that against it, though, because when it comes to originality and depth this game delivers. *Giants* is equally good online or offline, and in this day and age where developers tend to concentrate on either one or the other, its versatility is a treat. **[M]**



Delphi captures a couple of monsters inside a huge time bubble.



Two naked ladies dance on a cliff. Note how far into the distance you can see.

NO 1. THE LARCH

Pythonesque humour? Oh yes, please

The humour in *Giants* is a little on the odd side, and in some ways very *Monty Python*. Here, for example, one of the Meccs dresses up as a bush in order to avoid detection. If he's sneaky enough our little friend here will be able to make it all the way to the enemy base without being seen. If he does that he can steal a Smartie and make a dash for it.



Didn't that bush just... on never mind.



A Mecc goes on a recon mission above a nearby base.



Jim Davidson's Generation Game.



If I caught a fish as ugly as that...

IN PERSPECTIVE

When it comes down to the crunch, *Giants* is one of the best third-person action/adventure game around at the moment. The story is well devised and absorbing, the graphics are stunning, it plays well and it has lots of beautiful naked ladies in it.

What more could you want?

Giants: Citizen Kabuto

The Nomad Soul

Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine

Messiah

Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PIII 233
Memory 64Mb RAM, 400Mb hard disk
space **WE SAY** PIII 500 with 128Mb RAM
and hardware acceleration

RZ VERDICT

UPPERS Play as three very different characters • Good multiplayer game • Quite good mini RTS section • Kabuto is fantastic to look at and control • Amazing amount of weapons and spells

LOWERS Can't select different characters at will • Questionable AI • Fairly tough

85 A giant among equals

THE CAST AND CREW

As well as the three main races there are plenty of other species roaming the land. Here's just a small selection of the kind of creatures you're likely to meet throughout *Giants*' 45 levels



SMARTIES

The Smarties are natives to the island and are also one of the most important resources in the game. However, Smarties will only work for you if you provide them with a pub so that they can chill out after a hard day's work. If you do this for them, they will reward you with shops, vehicles, weapons, spells and even a base.

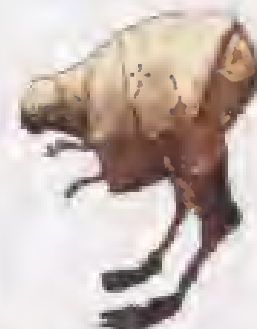
change the way a landscape looks. They also serve as transportation for the Sea Reaper Henchmen.

Sea Reapers can create. This handy creature swims up to the shore with up to 15 jellyfish in its mouth. It then proceeds to spit them on the ground where they burst and create toxic fumes that damage any living thing that's in the vicinity.



CHARGER

This massive bull-like creature has amazingly tough skin and is extremely difficult to kill. The only effective way to stop him is to shoot at his gob when he's charging at you. They are often found in the fields surrounding Sea Reaper bases.



VIMPS

The basic livestock of the island. Every race relies on Vimps in order to survive. They are probably most important to Kabuto though, so if you can destroy his main source of power, you can do well.



SHEPHERD

Shepherds are rare, but they are usually found close to Vimps. Oddly, they kill the Vimps rather than protect them, but there you go. It's a funny old world.

SEA REAPER HENCHMEN

The Sea Reapers' personal bodyguards hunt in packs and will relentlessly chase you down if you bump into one of their many patrols. They are also used to guard Sea Reaper bases. They are quick and deadly.



VERMS AND SPLITTERS

Annoying flying bat-like creatures with rows of razor-sharp teeth. If you kill one, it changes into five Splitters (smaller versions of the Verm), which start dive-bombing you. Steer clear of them if you can.



SONAK

This great lumbering beast is capable of sending out shockwaves of sound that inflict massive damage on anything in its way, including the ground you stand on. Sonaks can completely



RIPPERS

Where there's one, there's usually more. These nasty pieces of work shoot up out of the ground and fire deadly blue clouds of gas at you. They can be destroyed fairly easily, but their sheer number can often be overwhelming.



SEA MONSTER

One of the best weapons the



COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT 2

PCZONE
AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE

★ £34.99 • EA • Out October

**A surprise attack from Westwood sees
Richie Shoemaker reeling in confusion**

Considering all the delays, hype and disappointment that surrounded last year's release of *Command & Conquer* sequel *Tiberian Sun* (PCZ #81), *Red Alert 2* has, in comparison, had a rather quiet time of it. Its announcement in May took many by surprise (including us) and now it seems barely has the marketing machine had time to get into first gear than the game has been finished, packaged and readied for release. Consequently, thanks in no small part to the worldwide panning of *Tiberian Sun*, expectation for Westwood's new real-time strategy game has been only marginally higher than that we would reserve for a decent English summer. To its credit, developer Westwood has neither proclaimed *Red Alert 2* to be ground-breaking nor Earth-shattering and, after the tragic anti-climax that was

Tiberian Sun, we wouldn't have believed them if they had.

Using an enhanced – unnoticeably so – version of the *Tiberian Sun* game engine and sporting many gameplay features and units from a four-year-old game, *Red Alert 2* could be seen as a glorified remake of its predecessor. Westwood has done the same thing before, with *Dune 2000* (PCZ #70) – the botched up remake of real-time strategy's most influential game – so it wouldn't be beneath them to do the same again.

Now before you all start sending me death threats for my cynical indifference, let me just say if I hadn't been so pessimistic before playing the game, I wouldn't have enjoyed it as much as I did.

Think about it – and be honest – what are your expectations for the next *Star Wars* game? I'd wager not too high after having wasted your money on *Force*

Commander. But because we are all *Star Wars* fans, or at least we should be, there is the hope that the next one will be brilliant. However, in *Red Alert 2*'s case I wasn't hoping for much at all. You'd do well to think the same, for if you do, I guarantee you'll be pleasantly surprised.

HEROES AND VILLAINS

When you review a game – or at least when I do – one essential

“Where *Tiberian Sun* was a faintly absurd yarn, *Red Alert* is somehow believable, despite being even more outlandish”

technique is to jot down pages of notes while you're playing, so when it comes to writing the review, you can refer back to them. Normally what is written down, though illegible, makes some sort of sense, but one of the last things I wrote was “missions good. Nothing special. Addictive”. I am at a loss as to what I was on about, but I can tell you this: the missions in themselves are pretty

undemanding, yet taken as a whole (and separated by a story that sees the USA being invaded) the two campaigns on offer (you can play as Allies or Soviets) are very engaging.

As is par for the course, you build a base, harvest ore, expand your borders and kill the unending trickle of enemy units until you overrun their base, all with scant regard for tactics – been there done that, we all have. With that

in mind, what has been baffling me is why I enjoyed *Red Alert 2* so much and yet could not derive any pleasure from *Tiberian Sun*. Both games are practically identical in structure, offering similar units to play with across a linear series of missions, liberally interspersed with high-quality video sequences. The only answer I can offer is a subtle difference in feel and mood.

Where *Tiberian Sun* was a dark and faintly absurd yarn full of square-jawed heroes and boo-hiss villains, *Red Alert* and its illustrious predecessor are somehow believable, despite being even more outlandish.

Graphically, *Red Alert 2* is far from great. The animation for some of the larger units, ships especially, is juddery and the explosions are hardly spectacular. However, bearing bright colours and full of tiny details – like baseball and football pitches, fast food bars and houses – many levels are full of civilian life that have little impact on the game, but add a touch of fun to the proceedings. Sunbathers run half-naked on the beaches and cattle make themselves targets for your restless attack dogs on the farms. Elsewhere, across maps frozen with ice, all the buildings are draped with snow as if to tell us that they had been there forever. They haven't of course, but it's seemingly insignificant details



After stopping off at McBurger Kong, the Russians are ready for battle.



If in doubt, just send everyone in.

like this that add a bit of colour to our interminably dull lives.

ANIMAL MAGIC

In regard to the two sides you can choose to play, both are as distinct as any you'll find in a real-time strategy game. One of Westwood's strengths is that it always offers two very different challenges in all its strategy games, by throwing in units and buildings that look and play to different styles. Many of the units are standard fare with infantry and tanks in abundance, but there are a number of clever differences between even those.

Soviet conscripts are both cheap and weak, American GIs are marginally more expensive and can be deployed in a defensive role, able to tortify themselves in an instant within a cocoon of sandbags.

The Allied Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV) is another interesting unit. Alone it is a weak reconnaissance tank, armed with a simple rocket launcher. But put a GI inside and its turret becomes a powerful anti-personnel platform. With an engineer at the controls it alters into a mobile repair vehicle and there are other transformations that can be achieved by trying out other, more potent infantry units inside. Things like Rocket Launchers, Tech Yards and Gap Generators we've seen before, but many units, both old and new, can combine in interesting ways. Place some Tesla Troopers with their electrifying weapons around a static Tesla Coil and they'll boost the power of it and keep it charged even when the power is down during an enemy attack.

As in all RTS games, both sides' infantry units are easily



Notice the snow-topped buildings? Well we liked them.



There goes the World Trade Centre.

overrun, even in large numbers, but this time around they can find shelter in many of the neutral buildings that pepper the levels. It's a feature that is long overdue in a Westwood game (*Age Of Empires II* and the soon-to-be-released WWII RTS *Sudden Strike* both offer the same option) and although not every building can be captured, certain ones that are can be a powerful complement to your base by creating chokepoints through which a lightly armed enemy can quickly perish. Furthermore, there are four neutral Tech Buildings that can be procured – Airports, Hospitals, Outposts and Oil Derricks – all of which can support and replenish units that might otherwise have to make a long journey back to base.

The Soviets are still the side of cheap mass-produced technology, underhand and willing to sacrifice numbers for victory. In contrast, the Allies rely on fast, high-tech units that are more adaptable, yet weaker if left in a sustained fight with Soviet units of similar role.

One aspect in which *Red Alert* always won out over *C&C* was its use of naval units. And once again, *Red Alert 2* gives the Soviet side a greater underwater navy, while the Allied fleet is predominantly surface-based with Destroyers, Cruisers and Aircraft Carriers going against the Russian Typhoon Subs and Giant Squids.

Trained animals play a larger role in this sequel than they did in the original *Red Alert*. The Allies now have attack dogs, as do the Russians, and against the Squids the forces of good rely on herds (or pods if you want to be technical) of clicking dolphins and their sonar attack.





A man-made lightning storm moves in.



Notice the polygon-tiled terrain.



Russian paratroopers join in the party.



Just a... little... lower... Tanya.

BRING YOUR FRIENDS

Even though the storyline and the level-by-level feed of new technologies are enough to keep you entertained throughout the two campaigns – and there is always the option of the skirmish game – there comes a time when the war will be over against the computer and the time will come to take on a human opponent. We won't even pretend that we have played *Red Alert 2* online yet, no servers are running anyway, but we did play over a LAN and, thanks to the diversity in units and the immediate familiarity of all of Westwood's games, playing against a real opponent was tremendous fun. In multiplayer or skirmish games you not only have to pledge allegiance to the Allied or Soviet sides, you have to choose an army from a particular country, each of which have a particular special unit they can use: Germany has tank destroyers; Libya has demolition trucks; Cuba has terrorists; the US has paratroopers; and Britain has snipers. Not a deal-clincher, as Steve Hill would say, but fun all the same.

As was the case in *C&C, Red Alert, Tiberian Sun* and now this,

multiplayer games are all about throwing forces forward to eat away at the opponent's defences. As you do so you are constantly thinking about what concoction of forces to send in next and while you leave your units to get on with it, you're cooking up another batch to send in. Westwood has never made strategy a priority in its games and here, too, the multiplayer game is about a slow pace of play that always ends up in spectacular fashion with entire bases wiped away by just one weapon. This – what we might term 'the railgun factor' – makes each game a race to build the most devastating weapon available rather than a plod through attack, counter-attack and stalemate.

THE BIT AT THE END

About as ground-breaking as Windows 98 is to Windows 95, *Red Alert 2* is no less essential for it. The interface has certainly improved since *Tiberian Sun* and the missions, varied and interesting, are carried along by a storyline that doesn't take itself nearly as seriously as other *C&C* games – for every cheesy

IN PERSPECTIVE

In the grand scheme of things *Age Of Empires II* is still the best traditional real-time strategy game available, but it lacks the scale of carnage and simple honest-to-goodness fun of the *Command & Conquer* series. Without a doubt, *Red Alert 2* is Westwood's finest game to date and, although it isn't ground-breaking in the least, graphically it eclipses the old collection (available as the *Worldwide Warfare* box set) and for sheer fun beats *Tiberian Sun* hands down. Basically, *Red Alert 2* is an essential purchase for RTS fans and for the rest of you it comes with the highest recommendation.

C&C Worldwide Warfare

C&C: Tiberian Sun

C&C: Red Alert 2

Age Of Empires II

line of dialogue, there's a knowing smile behind.

Remarkably well-rounded, the phrase 'more than the sum of its parts' could easily have been written with *Red Alert 2* in mind. Unspectacular graphics, an AI that is clearly artificial and with little in the way of true innovation, *Red Alert 2* is, nevertheless, an excellent game, well-designed and carried through with wit and style. In these times where realism is *de rigueur*, *Red Alert 2* feels like a breath of Irish air. Just remember not to expect too much and you'll be as impressed as we were. **PC**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 266
Memory 64Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** Direct X compatible graphics card **WE SAY** This should see you through. It's not the most progressive game on the shelves

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Red Alert, the story so far...

In theory it's a good plan, but the greatest theorist of them all failed to realise the implications of his actions. After developing a time-travelling device in post-war America, Albert Einstein returns to 1923 to wipe Hitler from the history books. Unchecked by Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, lead by Joseph 'Madboy' Stalin, embarks on a European crusade to turn our continent a nasty shade of red.

Defeated by an uncharacteristic display of unity, Stalin is killed by European Allied forces and Premier Romanov takes over Soviet control. Seemingly compliant and peaceful, he is of course quite mad and plotting his revenge against the Allies, he decides that America is ripe for invasion. Using mind control technology, the USSR sabotages America's nuclear capability and a huge invasion is launched into New Mexico, Texas and California. Which is where you come in to save the day.



As we said, quite mad.

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Better than *Tiberian Sun*

- Bright, colourful and distinctive graphics
- Well balanced and at just at the right pace
- Basically, a fun, action-packed and well-designed RTS

DOWNERS Doesn't exactly push the boundaries

- Bog-standard, scripted AI
- Not the most strategically demanding RTS on the market

82 An immensely entertaining and worthy sequel

AT DIRT TAKE COVER
RETURN YOU'RE MINE
FOLLOW ME
COVER ME
QUICK, TAKE COVER
LET'S GET OUTTA HERE
SPEAK YOUR MIND

MICROSOFT
SIDEWINDER
GAME VOICE



For the ultimate PC gaming experience, SideWinder® Game Voice is the most revolutionary device in voice chat and voice command. Link up with your on-line friends quickly and easily, then plot your revenge on enemies, taunt your opponents, discuss the latest gaming tactics, manage your teams more efficiently and shout your winning elation. Want to carry out gaming commands without taking your finger off the pulse? Then just say the word and the game will carry out your instructions, so no more complex keyboard commands. Isn't it time you made yourself heard?

www.gamevoice.co.uk

Microsoft

AGE OF EMPIRES II — THE CONQUERORS EXPANSION

★ £24.99 • Ensemble Studios/Microsoft • Out now

Raids, skirmishes and pillaging — all in a day's work for *Laurence Scottford*

The *Rise Of Rome* for the original *Age Of Empires* set the standard for all subsequent expansion packs. It was no longer enough to churn out expansions that consisted of little more than the levels rejected from the original version. Now gamers expect a hefty shot in the arm and a new lease of life as a result. *The Conquerors Expansion* for *Age Of Empires II* meets this expectation head on. Yes, you're going to get additional campaigns, but they come packaged with a host of improvements that will revitalise your interest and add a new shine to multiplayer games.

OK, when you load up *The Conquerors* you're not exactly going to be bowled over by the extensive graphical changes it introduces. In fact, let's get that one major gripe over and done with now. Considering that five new civilisations (Spanish, Huns, Aztecs, Mayans and Koreans) have been introduced, it's a bit poor that there's only one new set of building graphics. But once you get beyond that you'll begin to understand where all those product development dollars have gone.

RINGING THE CHANGES

What Ensemble Studios has rather cunningly done is invest

a lot of time in playing its own game and then ironing out the wrinkles. Let's take the use of siege weapons as a classic example. In most RTS games, siege weapons — or other heavy weapons platforms — are generally controlled by Mr Thick of Thicksville. Invite him along on a raid and he'll quite happily mow down half a dozen of his own troops in his eagerness to take down one lonesome enemy soldier. Thankfully, Ensemble has given him the boot and replaced him with Mr Smart Bastard of Clevertown, who will refrain from having a go if there's any danger of his own side or his allies getting hammered by "friendly fire".

"Fantastic," you say, "at last I can stage some realistic siege warfare." But wait, there's more. Instead of sending in those battering rams while your foot soldiers hang around on the sideline until the rams have done their job, you can now kill two birds with one stone. Just put your troops inside the ram and not only will you get more speed and damage capability, you'll also protect your troops in the run up to the enemy's walls.

Many of the additional changes have been designed to enable you to focus on strategy instead of housekeeping tasks. So once the villagers have built



The Mayans sporting this season's new Latin American look.

certain types of buildings, they will head off and do something useful rather than hanging around waiting for you to give them

may not be the most visible aspects of what you've spent your money on, but my point is they are probably the most

"Many of the additional changes have been designed to enable you to focus on strategy instead of housekeeping tasks"

orders. You can also order farms to be replanted in advance so you don't have to check up on them so often, and so on.

These and the half-dozen other changes to the basic engine

valuable in terms of adding longevity to the game.

GAMES CONQUERORS PLAY

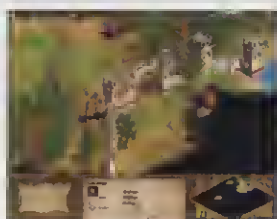
Despite all that, you'll expect to be given some more meaty

single-player action to get your teeth into. This comes in the shape of four new campaigns. As the name of this expansion pack implies, these are all based on the activities of history's bona fide heavyweights. You can ride along with Attila The Hun as he mops up the remnants of the Roman Empire, win back Castille with El Cid, or hold off the Spanish with Montezuma. Finally, there's a varied collection of single missions focusing on great military leaders from Erik the Red to Henry V.

★ WALKTHROUGH

PONY EXPRESS

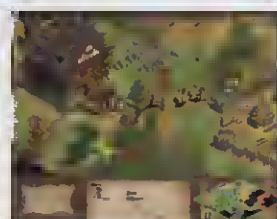
Getting Attila through his first day



1 Having bumped off your brother, Bleda, it's time to start building up your forces. See that tempting enemy enclosure next to your camp? For the time being leave it well alone — you don't want to upset the Persians at this point.



2 Stay clear of the Persians to the south and the Mongols to the north. Instead, head straight for the Roman encampment and conduct a quick raid to free the prisoners there. Make sure you rescue the Mongol Prince while you're at it.



3 The Mongols are now your allies. Supply them with enough horses and they will furnish you with unlimited supplies of Mangudai — mounted archers. You can easily polish off the Romans with these and some of your own heavy units.



4 Finally, head south to tackle those pesky Persians. These guys are pretty tough, but if you use the expendable Mangudai to distract them while you send in Petards and siege weaponry you can still break through their defences.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Shogun proved you could take RTS to 3D successfully. Try *Theocracy* if you don't like mission-based play, or *Pharaoh* for large-scale building. *Majesty* is aimed at more casual players – steer clear of it if you're a hardcore RTS fan.

Majesty

Shogun

Theocracy

Pharaoh

AOE II – The Conquerors

All this adds up to a hefty number of hours of gameplay. As far as the difficulty level is concerned, Ensemble Studios seems to have opted for a middle ground between meeting the needs of hardcore *AOE* players and relative beginners. Fair enough, but if you've played *AOE* extensively you may well find that the single-player campaigns don't engage you as much as they might have done (without playing at the Hard setting, that is).

Having said that, if you've played *AOE II* to the extent that you know it like the back of your hand, you're going to be surprised by some of the tweaks to the standard units and the introduction of new technologies. I wouldn't try to be too smart and rely on the understanding of unit strengths and weaknesses you've built up over hundreds of games.

THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE

Again overshadowing the single-player campaigns for longevity are the additional single and multiplayer game types. King Of The Hill is a particularly good example. Players begin with a small settlement at the edge of the map. In the centre of the map is a monument, but it's surrounded by water, trees or ice. Your first objective is to find a way to get to the monument. Once you are there you've got to defend it for 500 years. That's made a little trickier by the fact that you won't be allowed to build anything in the vicinity of the monument. In the case of a monument placed on an island, for example, your only choice is to defend it with ships. Still, that will give you a good opportunity to check out all those new ship formations.

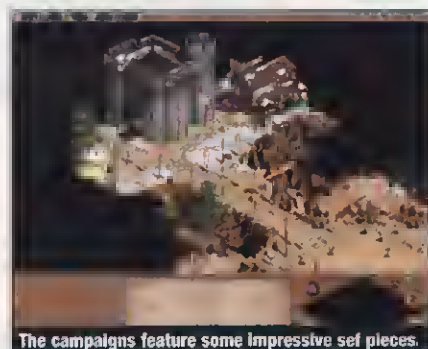
If you haven't got the time to play a lengthy game in which



When you add to defensive walls after building round tree lines, they can end up looking a little crazy.



The siege weapons will hold their fire on the enemy gate if your own or allied units get caught by friendly fire.



The campaigns feature some impressive set pieces.



The only way to defend this monument is with ships.



Even the mightiest structures can be brought down if siege weapons can get through the initial volley of arrows.

there's a hefty amount of resource management and army building to be done before you see any action, then I thoroughly recommend *The Wonder*. Every player starts in the Imperial Age with a huge stockpile of resources. One player is in a walled off enclave which also contains a Wonder. Everybody else starts on the outside of the wall and has to break in and get to the Wonder. It makes for some truly spectacular battle sequences. If you haven't got a map literally strewn with corpses within ten minutes of starting play, you're doing something wrong.

MAP HAPPY

There's a whole host of extras that we just haven't got space to cover here, including additional terrain types and maps, which help to spice up *AOE II*'s standard fare. And if you get really stuck for something new to do you can always tackle the obscure scripting language and attempt to create some new map types of your own.

When all's said and done, Ensemble has to be congratulated for putting so much effort into what is, after all, an expansion pack. It's always a good sign when developers play their own games to the extent that they are able to make significant improvements to the gameplay in the way that's demonstrated here. If you've tried *AOE II* previously and found it doesn't really tingle your taste buds, I couldn't in all honesty say that this expansion set is going to make you change your mind. But if you're a hardened addict, then you'll find plenty here to maintain your interest for some time to come. **A+**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 166
Memory 32Mb RAM (64Mb for Windows NT or Windows 2000) **WE SAY** PIII with 64Mb RAM if you want to play at the higher resolutions

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Smart improvements to the game engine • Three new game types • New units and map types that make a real difference
DOWNERS Only one new set of building graphics • Probably too easy for hardcore players

79 Won't change the world, but a must for *AOE* fans



A weapon that sucks out souls like a vacuum cleaner.

Julie Strain. I wonder why she's the main character.

HEAVY METAL FAKK 2

★ £29.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out now

James Lyon knows a really funny joke involving a play on the words *FAKK 2*. Oh, no, it's gone... but you get the idea

Every so often I stop and think to myself, maybe we have seen all there is to see in the first/third-person shooter genre.

Maybe there are no new ideas out there. Maybe all we're doing is treading water, simply adding shinier graphics and bigger explosions. Or maybe soon we're going to drown in a wealth of uninspired titles similar to the platform flood of the 16-bit era.

But then suddenly I perk up and think, "hey, if *Half-Life* can manage something new, why can't anything else". And when I mean new, I mean something

so revolutionary that it's picked on and used by almost every other good game since. So here's what's new and interesting in *FAKK 2*: the wall-hugging move — if you push back against a wall, you can edge your way along a narrow ledge. A manoeuvre that's used about twice in the entire game.

The other vaguely interesting thing is that you can use two weapons at once. Your left and right hands can both be used to sport different firepower for both long- and short-range combat.

So we've established that *FAKK 2* does nothing new, but

that's no reason to put it down. There is at least one area where it really excels.

LARGE BREASTS

It looks gorgeous. And even a cynic like me came out rather impressed with some of the architecture on offer. The designers have imposed a real sense of grandeur on some levels that are worthy of praise. It's all thanks to the *Quake III* engine, of course, so there's plenty of curves — as if no one had ever drawn one before now. As for the actual interaction, well, that's a different story.

Starting off in your hometown as Julie Strain, your initial inventory consists of a pair of large breasts and a tight PVC suit, and your first task is to wander around

aimlessly trying to find something to do. This wasn't helped at first by the fact that the door I needed to go through could only be opened by using a keypad at the side, while other inconsequential doors opened automatically as soon as I stepped up to them. After wasting 20 minutes on that it was time to get into the game

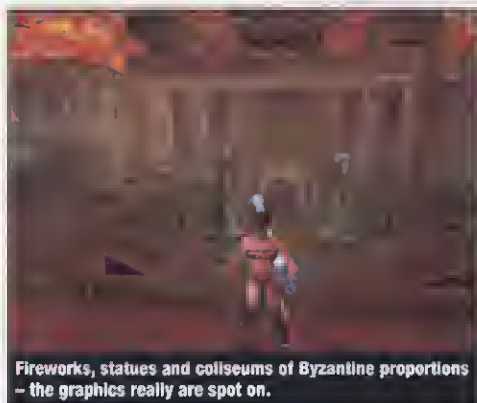
kind of obviousness usually reserved for the comment, "Are you alright?" after someone's been hit by a car. And if your idea of lip-syncing is to stick your hand in a sock and move it up and down like a mouth, then this is the game for you.

After all this scene setting, something finally happens when

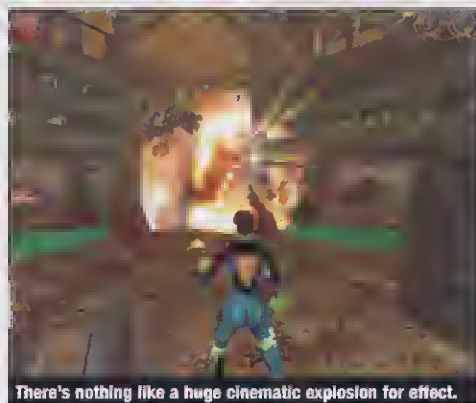
"The graphics may be some of the best in the genre, but that's a small distraction from the second-rate action you have to play through"

properly and talk to the citizens of my great adventure. Of course the citizens, like all other inconsequential characters in every game ever, have just three things to say, only one of which pushes the plot forward with the

the sinister meteors that constantly hit the shield surrounding your planet finally break through, bringing forth invaders who begin attacking the cows in the barn. And what form could this first invasion force



Fireworks, statues and coliseums of Byzantine proportions — the graphics really are spot on.



There's nothing like a huge cinematic explosion for effect.



Someone tries to give Julie the finger.



Oh dear...



The final boss so it seems. Excited? No.

IN PERSPECTIVE

All the games, all the same. *MDK 2*'s probably the most unique and fun. *Soul Reaver*'s not a stinker, but *Prince Of Persia* in 3D definitely is.

HEAVY METAL FAKK 2

MOK 2

Soul Reaver

POP 30

possibly take? What could possibly serve as an introduction to the action that's to follow? What was one of the reasons why *Daikatana* was so bad? Flies. That's right, Ritual has taken a leaf out of Romero's book and populated the first couple of levels with some of the most annoying creatures ever to grace the PC. The only way to get rid of these flies is to swing your sword wildly about and spin in all directions, while trying to shoot them with your pistol. It's still inevitable that

some are going to get behind you causing you to take another angry swipe at them, narrowly missing so they can do it again. Hey, never mind, though, at least the graphics look good.

HO HUM

After dealing with this and confronting the first boss (defeat him by blowing up the explosive material that surrounds him – great idea, huh?), it's time for a switch of location. Such a location being a large sewer filled with industrial machinery. Things do hot up in the enemy department now, with a couple more creatures to shoot at and a few more weapons to collect. Overall, the weapons are an admirable bunch. The fact that I got through nearly the whole game, using only the sword and the pistol/Uzi has absolutely no bearing on the fact that every weapon is useful, does it? Mention must go to the sword at least, which uses the same mode of attack as that seen in *Jedi Knight* or *Soul Reaver*, being that if you push a button you can hack wildly at whatever's close

by. There's a combo move which can add an extra spin to things, but this is a little tricky to pull off and never seems as good as it should be.

The puzzles. Oh, the puzzles. What wondrous brain teasers have we in store? Well, if you haven't had enough of pushing buttons, pulling crates and shooting at things until they explode, you probably will when you've finished with this. Aside from this, you've got your leaping from platform to platform to look forward to as well.

After powering up your shield generator, there's the chance to defend your village from invasion before travelling on to battle along the ledges of a high cliff-face before wading through the mists of a dank swamp. It's not really fitting to call these levels inspired and even the graphics take a turn for the worst here.

Get past that and it's off to talk to what can only be described as a badly voiced Jamaican Yoda who tells you to go into four temples to complete the tasks within. The tasks being to leap

from platform to platform and shoot things until they explode. To be honest, these levels are the most impressive in terms of looks, but there's not much here that hasn't been seen at least once before. And then it's over and you're left to defeat the final boss. Astonishingly, in the last attempt of ingenuity, the developers have decided not to place your ultimate nemesis in a small open-planned arena with respawning ammo and health – actually, no, that's a lie – they have. While not exactly too easy, I seemed to reach the finale all too quickly before coming to a halt at the end. Although I had to use the quickload key after numerous failed jumping attempts.

AND SO ON...

I could go on some more about what else we've seen before, but there's not really much point. You just want to know it's any good. Yeah, sure it's fun, but if you've played *MDK 2*, *Tomb Raider*, or even *Soul Reaver*, you'll probably get a distinct sense of *déjà vu*. It anything, it shows the way the

latest episode in the Lara Croft instalment should have played and does a good job of pre-empting any new moves that game would care to think up next.

And, yes, the graphics may certainly be some of the best in the genre, but that's only a small distraction from the second-hand action you have to play through just to admire them. **C2**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 300 Memory 64Mb, 300Mb hard disk space **ALSO REQUIRES** 8Mb 3D card **WE SAY** Get a good card if you want to appreciate it better

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Lovely graphics • Some great new moves • Far less buggy than *Sin*
DOWNERS Haven't we seen it all before? • Still a few texture bugs

66 The next generation of cliché is upon us

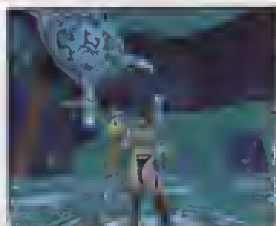
WALKTHROUGH

FOUR PLAY

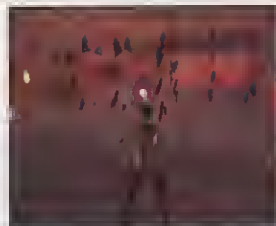
Towards the end of the game you have to pay a visit to the We Cemetery in order to obtain the Heart Of The We. But, of course, nothing comes that easily. You can only do this by completing four different areas



1 The Wind Of Spirit: get attacked and pissed off at the same time as you're surrounded by dozens of flies. And then get blown over a chasm.



2 The Water Of Purity: there's no swimming in this game, but standing in water or collecting vials of the stuff throughout the game does replenish your armour meter.



3 The Sanctity Of Blood: we know it's got something to do with blood because it's mostly red. This section features a lot of leaping from platform to platform.



4 The Bridge Of Reason: the reason being that if you don't run along it really fast, it collapses and you die. There's a lot of death by falling in this game.

END

WINGS OF VICTORY!

BATTLE OF BRITAIN

From the creators of

*the award winning **Flying Corps***

*and **MIG Alley** comes by far the*

most accurate depiction of the

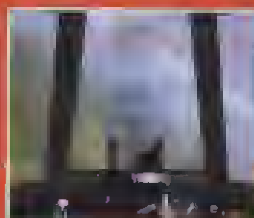
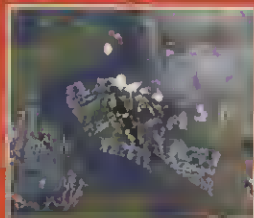
Battle of Britain to date.

Take to the sky in a game that

recreates some of the most decisive

air battles of the Second World War.

- Fly five authentic aircraft including the famous **Spitfire** and **Ju87 Stuka** dive-bomber
- Fully interactive real time **dynamic campaigns** that can be played from both sides
- Multi-player options including **death match**, **team play** and **quick mission**



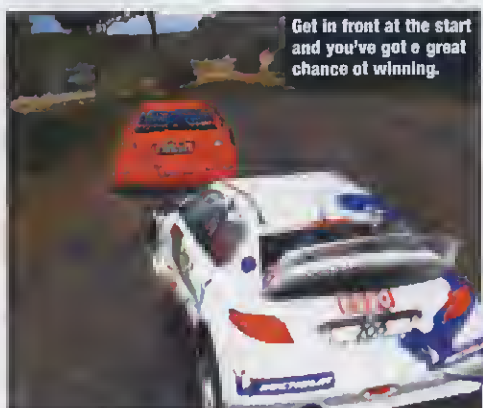
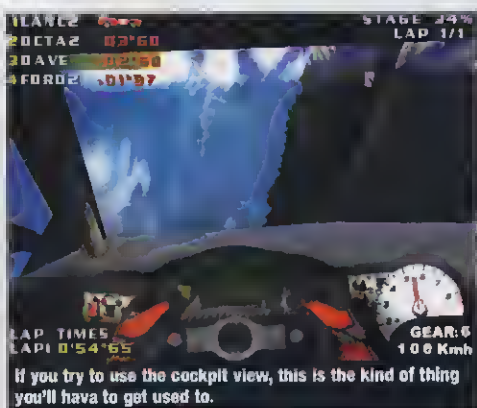
PC CO-ROM

www.empire.co.uk

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V-RALLY 2 EXPERT EDITION REVIEWS



V-RALLY2 EXPERT EDITION

★ £34.99 • Infogrames • Out now

Big left, turning into small open right. Medium left. Medium right. Small left. Dave Woods memorises the way back from the pub

Get yourself a console and a rally game and you know you're in for a riot, especially in split-screen mode. Indeed, the original *V-Rally* was a massive hit on the PlayStation and the sequel has been selling, not too shabbily, on the Dreamcast for the past few months. Like the first, it's a completely unrealistic slice of arcade action, with decent tracks, strict invisible barriers to stop you from crushing the onlookers and only a slight nod towards visible

damage, with brake lights deciding not to show themselves if you slam into the banks too hard. Turn your car on its head and you'll be miraculously righted almost instantly, and no matter

McRae (which is on budget) and things don't look quite so hot. The graphics are passable – although pop-up is still visible on certain tracks – and there are some nice touches, including

“The barked instructions are non-stop and the corners as treacherous as anything the Belgian Grand Prix could throw at you”

how many times you crash, or ram an opponent, you won't be stopped from progressing. It's rally-by-numbers, but it's fun.

visible headlights and spectators running for cover as you scream around a corner. The different surfaces work reasonably well, if a tad exaggerated, with snow-covered tracks turning into the art of timing your slide to your co-driver's instructions and the respective coloured arrows that pop up at the top of the screen.

To get through the first set of tracks all you need to do is concentrate on the horizon and tap the left and right directions regularly to keep righting yourself. Occasional use of the handbrake and brake can shave seconds off your lap times, but quite often it's

just as easy to slam into a bank and accelerate off. Things get harder later on – the barked instructions are non-stop and the corners as treacherous as anything the Belgian Grand Prix could throw at you in the rain.

NETIQUETTE

Different play modes include Standard Time Trial, Arcade, Trophy and Championship, and to progress and open up the theoretical maximum of 80 circuits and 26 cars you have to work your way through sets of tracks, with your cumulative time for the lot taken as your finishing position. This means you can't relax even you're way out in front.

There's no option to race online against others, as usual. Lag is still the suspect that is dragging down the station every time we ask about the absence of proper multiplayer support, but there are enough people with high-speed connections to make it worthwhile. It's also the feature that could make a console conversion like this. *4x4 Evolution* is due out soon and that's promising multiplatform racing across the Internet, so any

excuse is soon going to look pretty hollow.

By way of compensation, you can register with *V-Rally 2 Online* and upload scores and tracks (made with the supplied editor), but the only true multiplayer action is two-player split-screen. It's fun, granted, but if you're already privy to a decent rally game then there's nothing here that should make you think twice about shelling out for more. As for the Expert Edition tag? It is for experts, we'd like to see the version designed for those with learning difficulties. **PCZ**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P266
Memory 32Mb **WE SAY** Add a 3D card, turn the graphics down and you'll be fine

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Decent AI • Visible damage and headlights • Track editor
DOWNERS Too limited • Invisible barriers everywhere • No online play

62 Needs a new co-driver

IMPERSPECTIVE

V-Rally 2 is good fun, but there are better games available, especially with *Colin McRae Rally* on budget.

Colin McRae Rally

Rally Championship

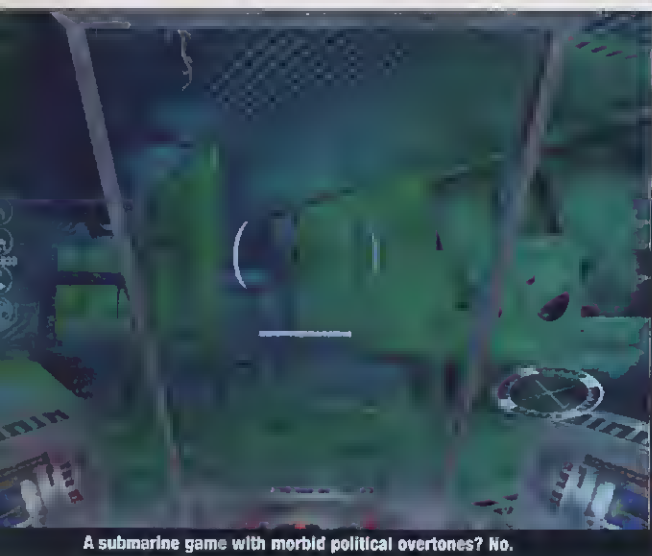
V-Rally 2



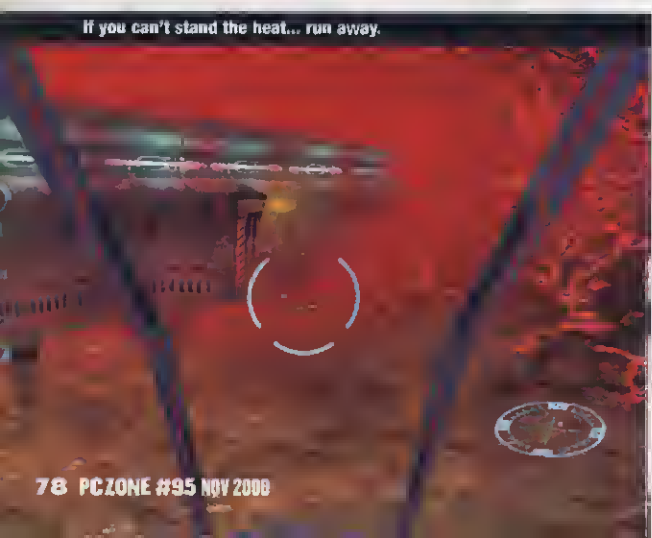
Battle the Jellyfish Queen in a duel to the death.



Everybody loves an underwater explosion.



A submarine game with morbid political overtones? No.



If you can't stand the heat... run away.

DEEP FIGHTER

★ £29.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

We gave **James Lyon** a copy of this new underwater vehicle game in a desperate attempt to get him to say something deep

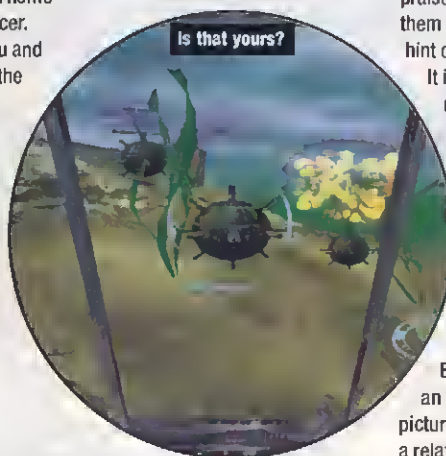
It must be a hard life piloting a submarine: you and a dozen sailors going down, surrounded by salty seamen on all sides, anticipating the moment when you tire the torpedoes. And actually working on the sub must be murder as well. Ha ha. (Oh dear.)

Rapidly side-stepping Painfully Obvious Submarine Joke #26, *Deep Fighter* is the semi-sequel to the nice-looking-but-dull *Sub Culture* - and that's because you get to ride about in a submarine roughly in proportion to the dimensions of a small baby's head. For reasons I can't fathom, the story sees you in the process of building a mothership to escape from your seabed home and jet off somewhere nicer. Only the bad news for you and the other citizens is that the nearby tribe of bad guys, the Shadowkin, want to scupper your plans for, again, God only knows what reason.

What I did manage to learn, I found mostly through the FMV clips that detail your mission briefings throughout the game. And if anything deserves to be derided first, it's got to be this. It looks like somebody

seems to have been simplified in *Deep Fighter*. Control of your sub consists of the bare minimum of keys for movement, while combat is decidedly sparse with nothing more complicated than keeping back and shooting until the enemy explode. It's also worth pointing out that there's a few puzzles to solve in the form of switches to pull and the like. Later levels feature more testing problems but even these seem to come straight out of a children's puzzle book, being fun at first but ultimately too easy (with the exception of the reflecting light puzzle, which I was stuck on at the time of writing).

Aware of the fact that it needed some variety to prop up the game, Criterion has



"The only award this game's going to win is the PC ZONE Award For Least Convincing Expression When Learning Bad News"

must have left the doors to the local amateur community theatre company unlocked again as there's a couple of performances in here that make Keanu Reeves look like an Oscar-winner. The only award this game's ever going to win is the PC ZONE Award For The Least Convincing Expression When Learning Bad News.

DIVE, DIVE, DIVE

Far from the complex nature of most sims these days, everything

done its damndest to ensure each mission is as different from the last as is possible to make it. So one mission sees you dragging doped-up fish along the seabed with your built-in magnet, another sees you wiping out a nearby flotilla of malevolent jellyfish, and yet another sees you detending your mine against the aforementioned Shadowkin. One thing's for sure, it's safe to assume that the game isn't based on the coast of mainland

IN PERSPECTIVE

Underwater action games, hmmm? Well, *Sub Culture*: nice but dull, *Archimedean Dynasty*: a flawed shooter, and *Subwar 2050*: probably one for the abandonware crowd. Ho hum.

Deep Fighter

Sub Culture

Archimedean Dynasty

Subwar 2050

Britain - there's definitely no missions to rescue a used condom trapped in the middle of a pile of floating taecies anywhere in here.

SINK OR SWIM?

While the diversity of the missions can definitely be praised, the actual playing of them can't, as most have a hint of dullness about them.

It is interesting that you never know what's going to come next, but most of the game feels slow-paced and some parts drag on just a little too long.

It certainly looks pretty enough but, ironically, it lacks a certain depth.

Even though it paints an assuredly attractive picture, *Deep Fighter* remains a relatively slow-paced game with not much at all to recommend it. **C**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233
Memory 32Mb RAM, 600Mb hard disk space **ALSO REQUIRES** A 3D card
WE SAY P300 with 64Mb RAM

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS A wide variety of missions
 - Pleasant underwater graphics
- DOWNERS Quite a few dull moments
 - More piss-poor FMV

53 *Deep Fighter*, shallow game

SUDDEN STRIKE™

YOU AS
WHOSE
ARMY?



"One of the most beautiful WWII wargames to date" pc.ign.com

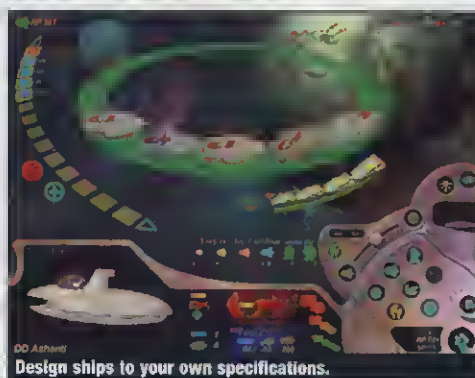
"A multiplayer session of Sudden Strike promises to be an unforgettable experience" [PC Zone](http://PCZone.com)

"The game, based around World War Two is building quite a following even before release." [Gamespot UK](http://GamespotUK.com)

"One of the smashingest RTS games on the horizon, CDV's Sudden Strike." [Daily Radar UK](http://DailyRadarUK.com)



The alien invaders unleash a deadly volley of sewing needles.



Design ships to your own specifications.



Earth's final stand was absolutely pathetic.

REACH FOR THE STARS

★ £29.95 • Mattel Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 64Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** 4x CD-ROM **WE SAY** That'll do.

Here's the good news. *Reach For The Stars* has absolutely nothing to do with a sickly bunch of teenyboppers, who when not subjecting us to their rubbish songs are torturing us with their non-existent acting skills. The not so good news is that *Reach For The Stars* is a turn-based menu-driven strategy game, which will challenge your graphics card less than a word processor. Fortunately, though, once you get over its basic looks, you'll realise that things aren't nearly as bleak as they initially seem.

RFTS is set in the distant future, when humans start to explore and colonise space. Inevitably, mankind stumbles

across alien races and rather than everyone sitting down for a civilised chat about culture and poetry, a massive war ensues. However, you're not just constricted to the one campaign. There are 30 preset ones to choose from, each with its own goals and problems, and should you get bored of these, there's a random map generator for unlimited variety. There are also 16 races for you to choose from.

In order to succeed in any campaign, you must not only defend the star systems under your rule, but expand to the other ones as well. This will often involve a battle of some sort, and it's important to make sure that you have a well-balanced force if you want to have a good chance of winning.

One of *RFTS*'s best features is that you can construct ships to your own specifications, which adds an extra

element to your strategy. Against fast-breeding races like The Hive, you'll need to concentrate on building a few highly powerful ships, instead of trying to outman them. But the combat, unfortunately, is a little uninspired. Choose the formation of your troops and the distance from which you want them to attack the enemy, and sit back and watch them fire at each other until one side wins.

Combat aside, *Reach For The Stars* is an entertaining if uninspired turn-based strategy game, and if you're a fan of the genre, the excellent AI and unlimited maps should provide you with several weeks of entertainment.

Martin Korda

PCZVERDICT

60%



The Slag Brothers take a trip downtown.



A big log causes some major problems.

WACKY RACES

★ £34.99 • Infogrames • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P400 and a decent 3D card will just about suffice.

Yes, that *Wacky Races*, the classic Hanna-Barbara cartoon that while taking a fairly revisionist stance on the laws of physics, did at least teach kids the important lesson that cheats never prosper – this rule obviously doesn't apply to lawyers, politicians and prime ministers, of course. Despite his devious scheming, evil Dick Dastardly and his canine sidekick Muttley never once troubled the scorers. Instead, victories would be meted out to the rest of the field, including Penelope Pitstop, Peter Perfect, Red Max, Sergeant Blast, The Slag Brothers and The Gruesome Twosome. That's the sum total of the characters available here, with Dastardly coming into play as a bonus. Whither then The Ant Hill Mob, The Arkansas Chugga-Bug, Rufus and Buzzsaw in the Buzzwagon and Professor Pat Pending in his Convert-A-Car? Not bleeding in here, that's where. This, despite the fact that they were all present and correct in the Dreamcast version.

Confused? Don't worry, we are, too. It seems that while the Dreamcast version was developed in-house by Infogrames, the PC incarnation was farmed out to American outfit Appaloosa.

Glaring omissions aside, the rest of the game also suffers in comparison. Control seems a lot stiffer, graphical glitches regularly emerge and a number of crucial gameplay mechanics have been overlooked. That said, it's still recognisably *Wacky Races*, and even men with steel hearts can't fail to conjure up a flicker of nostalgia. But cut through the sentimentality and it's little more than a stylised *Mario Kart*.

The improbable power-ups are in keeping with the spirit of the cartoon, and while they can be fairly random affairs, it's still possible to have a tightly contested race. Something that isn't in keeping with the series though is the fact that Dick Dastardly regularly appears atop the podium, an aberration that will stick in the craw of every honest Englishman.

Steve Hill

PCZVERDICT

50%

TRAFFIC GIANT

★ £29.99 • Infogrames • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor Pentium 2 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Spot on for this graphics-fest

You've built your dream city and populated it with model citizens. You've designed theme parks and airports, and ensured that hospitals run smoothly, so what possible ambitions could you have left in life? Only the big one – public transport. Buses, trains, trams, you name it, courtesy of *Traffic Giant*.

Developer JoWood is big in Germany, but it has chosen British towns (Vauxhall, Litchfield, Keele and Bath) as the stomping grounds for the 'action'. How you govern is up to you. Play as a bloated plutocrat dedicated to bedding profit, or as a benevolent ecologist anxious to keep cars off the road.

There are several different modes of playing as well. Playing in Campaign mode gives you specific targets to reach (increased coverage, higher profits, etc) before moving up to higher levels. Alternatively, you can tall back on the safer endless option if you just want to master your routing skills.

Completing even the simplest assignment is no pushover. Any of the thousands of randomly placed citizens can question your performance, reliability and popularity, but you can counter with advertising or free tickets to school kids to save your reputation. Setting up a line and buying in the vehicles you need is simple enough, the trick is being able to ferry enough of the right people to their destinations.

Now to the bad points. The graphics are uninspiring and the game obviously owes its existence to *Transport Tycoon* – not necessarily a bad thing, but not what you would call progress. However, despite the lack of originality, fans of the genre will probably glean some use out of it and there's no doubting the existence of some addictive qualities once you get sucked in.

Martyn Clayden

PCZVERDICT

55%



Fans scream their heads off as Aston Villa players arrive on the No 2 bus.



Buildings in your way? Just flatten 'em.



When disaster strikes, hire a spin doctor.

HOT WHEELS MICRO RACERS

★ £19.99 • Mattel Interactive • Out now

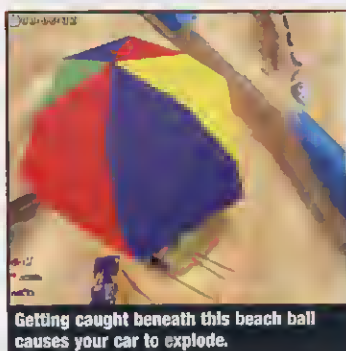
TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 32Mb **WE SAY** Whatever

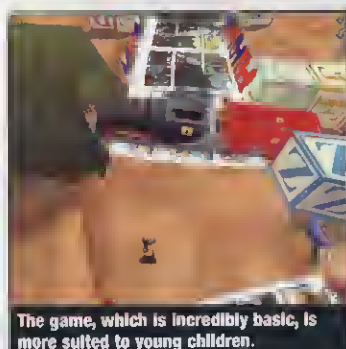
Shameless plagiarism, anyone? Not only does Mattel have the cheek to directly copy another game, but they even allude to it in the title. *Micro Machines* may have rocked a few bells some years ago, but the world is hardly salivating over the prospect of yet another version, let alone a second-rate imitation. But that's exactly what we have here, with the pseudo 3D viewpoint adding little to the experience.

That said, it retains the basic elements of its 'inspiration' and as such enables you to race a toy car around one of three locations, namely a beach, an office and a child's bedroom. As well as a desperately unsubtle exercise in Hot Wheels branding, each provides a number of unique hazards. Oh, what's the point? Just don't buy it because disappointment is inevitable.

Steve Hill



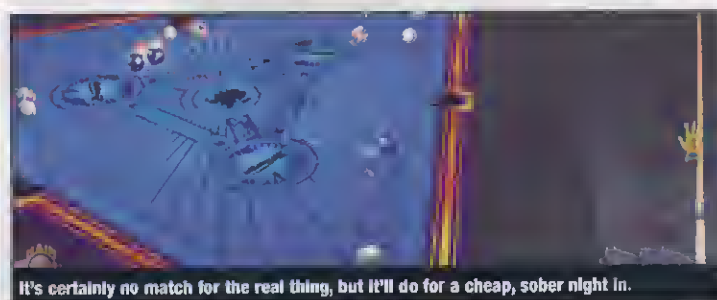
Getting caught beneath this beach ball causes your car to explode.



The game, which is incredibly basic, is more suited to young children.

PCZVERDICT

22%



It's certainly no match for the real thing, but it'll do for a cheap, sober night in.

MAXIMUM POOL

★ £10 • Sierra • Out October

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 32Mb **WE SAY** Fine

Pool is best reserved for the pub, not the PC, but if your liver needs a rest, or you need to practice before putting down cash for a game of killer, this is a decent alternative.

It couldn't be simpler to play. A mouse-driven control system handles camera placement and shots. The interface, although shallow, hides an inconspicuously detailed arcade-style pot 'em up. In addition to traditional variants – eight ball, cutthroat,

snooker etc – you can also play rocket ball, poker and other bastardisations.

On the whole, the cartoonish presentation covers all the bases. Animated competitors, sumptuous table views and a gratuitous use of U-rated speech samples set the weird family mood. UK pricing was still to be set at the time of this review, but if the suggested £10 tag is to be believed then this is well worth your pocket money.

Scott Steinberg

PCZVERDICT

59%

RUGBY 2001

★ £34.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** P300 with 64Mb with a 3D card

Let's make three things perfectly clear from the start of this review. First, there are two sports that are completely different, no matter how many of you think they're exactly the same: rugby union and rugby league. Second, rugby league is an incredibly exciting, fast-paced and athletic sport, while union is dull, slow and bogged-down by too many archaic rules. Third, I know this view is completely biased and will piss many of you off, but I don't care.

Rugby 2001 is based around union rather than league and, while it does an admirable job of recreating the intricacies of the rules and the physics of the oval-shaped ball, it does little more than make you yearn for a rugby league version (there was one a few years ago, so why no update?). The graphics are simple but functional, and the presentation lives up to the usual EA standard. Special mention should go to the chat you can listen to while you install the game, where the intricacies of incidents that occurred in matches 40 years ago in deepest Wales are discussed in great depth.

As is often the case with these games, a two-player match is much more fun than the single-player game. As long as you try to play tree-flowing rugby rather than the slow, tactical and stop-start game that inevitably ensues (there are literally thousands of ways to infringe the rules) in a union game, you can really start to enjoy it. However, sooner or later you get frustrated with the constant amount of pile-ups, retaken scrums and time-consuming throw-ins that never let you get into it. In a way *Rugby 2001* suffers from being too much like the real thing.

Mark Hill

PCZ VERDICT

68%



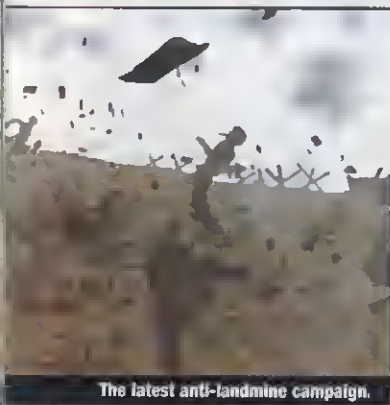
"Just a wee bit of jiggery-pokery in the scrum-down."



Even the speed-burst button doesn't stop this sorry lot from being incredibly slow.



Don't bother to write in and complain. Hill is a league boy and won't change his mind.



The latest anti-landmine campaign.



Looks the same as it did five years ago.

ARMY MEN: OPERATION MELTDOWN

★ £29.95 • 3DO • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** P300 with 64Mb with a 3D card

PCZONE PANTS It's a well-known fact that when a boxed copy of a game lands on our desks, it's going to be a stinker. There's another rule that comes pretty close to a given: every *Army Men* game is going to be slightly worse than the last. Combine these two together and you've normally got a job for a treelancer, but unfortunately I drew the short straw this time around.

And guess what? Sure enough, this game quickly melts into the familiar mix of top-down RTS, with shoddy graphics, poor map design, a wholly inadequate control system and a title that's utterly devoid of imagination, but with the smug grin on the front that says: "I've got a license to make money." Which, more's the pity, it probably has. Now repeat after me you maggots, "avoid!" and I mean, avoid at all costs.

Dave Woods

PCZ VERDICT

16%

MASTERGAMMON

★ £30 • Goto Software • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor Pentium Memory 8Mb RAM **WE SAY** You'll be able to run this on your calculator

"We all have this funny-looking board game at home, lost and forgotten in a rarely opened cupboard or drawer. Yes, the game of backgammon! This marvellous, mystical game has been played by millions of people throughout the world for thousands of years." So says the press blurb for *MasterGammon*, so it must be true.

It goes on to quote Chris Bray, British backgammon columnist for the *Independent* (you learn something new thing every day): "The really good thing about *MasterGammon* is the price." Now

we'd like to point out that £30 is not a brilliant price for a game that looks like a shareware download.

OK, the engine (*Snowie*) behind the visuals is pretty damn good, and if you're a backgammon whiz that wants to get a bit wizzier, then this is worth a punt. It also includes a three month free subscription to *NetGammon* and a trial version of *Snowie Pro* (as used by world champions, don't you know?), although, we might have been swayed more if there was a free online site to play through and the game generally was a bit more polished. Strictly for enthusiasts.

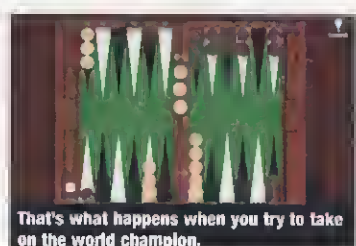
Dave Woods

PCZ VERDICT

45%



Look it's backgammon in 3D. Accelerator cards not required.



That's what happens when you try to take on the world champion.

Here's your chance to win a million pounds.



**Buy WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE? on
PC, PlayStation or Dreamcast
and you have a chance to win a million pounds***

*See inside box for competition entry form



celador

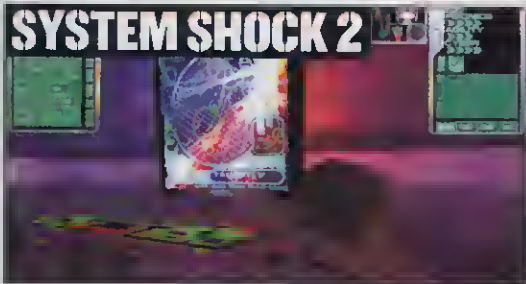

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THE CONTENDERS

DIABLO II



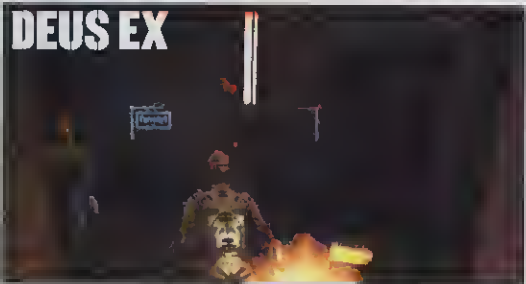
SYSTEM SHOCK 2



VAMPIRE



DEUS EX



FINAL FANTASY VIII



PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

PCZ SUPERTEST
RPGS

Many moons ago, it was told that a fabled game would swoop from the skies and strike down the evil pestilence that had stricken the lands of gaming with mediocrity. We dressed up in stupid costumes and went in search of the Holy Grail

DM Dave Woods

Role-playing. To non-believers these two words conjure up images of cloak-and-dagger shenanigans in darkened rooms. But the PC has pushed the genre past the traditional fantasy boundaries of old and as of now it's officially trendy again.

What we're interested in, and why we've all gathered in a dingy smoke-filled room, is simply to discover the best single-player role-playing game in the world. We're aware that there are lots of online-only epics such as *EverQuest*, but we're not going to touch them here. And we're not judging the assembled games on their multiplayer assets. What we're looking for is balanced gameplay and a solid storyline. To help us in our quest we've gathered six of the best examples in what's rapidly becoming an overcrowded genre. A couple of years back the room would be packed out with trolls, goblins, elves and pointy beards, ears and hats – but not now. In fact,

to steal a footballing cliché, you could say that the genre today is a game of two halves. On one hand you've got *Diablo II*, *Vampire* and *Planescape: Torment*. Living breathing, proof that the fantasy setting isn't extinct. And then you've got the new breed that's sleek, sexy, futuristic and in-your-face, combining elements of first-person shooters with stealth, puzzle-solving and non-linear storytelling. It's no surprise that *Deus Ex* and *System Shock 2* are here and it's no surprise that there's a common link behind both of them. Then there's *Final Fantasy VIII*, which is just weird, but an RPG Supertest wouldn't be complete without a bit of Japanese weirdness. →

Ⓛ to R: Dan (I love women's clothes) Emery is also partial to a bit of *Diablo II* but didn't review it. Ⓢ Paul (The Thief) Mallinson reviewed *Deus Ex* (PCZ #93, 94%) and *System Shock 2* (PCZ #80, 91%) Ⓢ Chris (Pointy Hat) Anderson lives for role-playing games Ⓢ Oave (bite yer ankles) Woods reviewed *Final Fantasy VIII* (PCZ #87, 79%) Ⓢ Martin (Warrior) Korda looks great in a loin cloth Ⓢ Mark (Bard) Hill reviewed *Vampire* (PCZ #92, 89%) and *Diablo II* (PCZ #93, 72%)

PHOTOGRAPHY Simon Clay





Diablo II - taking the game to new heights? Erm, no.

DIABLO II

Dave: We didn't give this the massive score that everyone else did, but I think we got it spot on.
Matto: It makes my eyes hurt. I was really surprised at the scrolling, which was really wobbly.
Chris: Is that a technical term?
Matto: You can see all the objects that lag behind. When the scrolling stops the objects catch up. Have you noticed the way it waves when it scrolls? I've seen better scrolling on a Spectrum.
Dave: Exactly. The engine and the graphics are a disgrace.
Chris: It's really obvious why they've done that, it's because they want people to play it

online. And if the graphics weren't shit, they'd get massive lag.
Dave: It's just laziness.
Chris: It's not laziness. It's to make it work online.
Dave: You can have a great engine and just drop the resolution to go online.
Chris: Yeah, but people wouldn't do that. If you go to 1024 x 768 in *EverQuest*...
Everyone: Aaaaaarrrrggghhhh.
Chris: ...the game breaks up and you get lag.
Dave: I've got a list of games in front of me, *Diablo II*, *System Shock 2*... no *EverQuest*, so shut up.

hours, I thought it was superb. Then, after that I just thought, "oh no, not again".

Matto: It's gratifying and the combat is quite intuitive.

Dave: Left-clicking? I suppose that is pretty intuitive.

Dan: You've got different types of attack. You've got the bog-standard hit it once, but as you go forwards you get multiple hits and stuff like that.

Matto: You can go round the back of monsters and hack them from the back, you can use different strategies. I like the way you

People go online and play for hours and hours.

Chris: This is the single-player game we're talking about here.

Matto: At what point in the game did it suddenly improve?

Dan: I think I was sitting on a bus in Brixton, thinking, "hang on, if I use that spell on that..." Just little things like that, it just started taking over.

Matto: Did something happen in the game, though?

Dan: When you start the game you're a crap character, getting trounced by rats, but as you go through you start beating things, using different strategies and tactics. As soon as you do that, you're hooked.

Chris: (Laughs) But that's what video games are all about. How many times have you thought that in a game? How many times did you get it in *Diablo I*? I completed the game and got immense

chicken legs, then you'll like *Diablo II*. It's like in *Revenant*, I killed this huge great spider and it dropped a drumstick, or a piece of ham.

Chris: I think *Revenant* is better than *Diablo II*.

Matto: It's not better in terms of the gameplay, but it's on a par story-wise, they're both as bad as each other. It's as generic and beardy-weirdy as you can get.

Mark: I'd like to know how you define gameplay because I don't think there's any gameplay in *Diablo II*.

Matto: It's very old skool.

Dave: I agree with Mark's score. It's not a terrible game. It's just nothing new and very disappointing.

Mark: When I was playing it, I actually wanted to play the original more than the sequel.

Dan: What do people want? What do people get? If it's not broke, don't fix it. It's like *Tetris*.

Martin: It just turns into a repetitive click-test, interspersed with a few crap sub-games, like that stupid football thing.

Everyone: (Silence)

Dan: (Laughs) What are you talking about?

Martin: Haven't you come across that yet?

Dave: This is *Diablo II* we're talking about here.

Dan: What football game? What are you talking about?

Martin: I don't know, a mate told me.

Dave: I think you've been had.

Martin: No.

Chris: You don't think you've been wound up? You think there's a football sub-game in *Diablo II*?

Martin: It's not football. It's tantamount to football. You have to kick a ball between two posts.

Dave: That's football. You tell us it's not football, then go on to give us a basic description of football.

Matto: Do you play it with a severed head?

Chris: Jesus Christ! Let me out of here!

“For the first three or four hours, I thought it was superb. After that I just thought, ‘oh no, not again’”

DAVE ON DIABLO II



move towards one and they all scatter out of the way.

Dan: The main problem is that it starts off really slow and really boring, and you've really got to go at it to get into the game. Most people haven't got the patience.

Dave: You see I think it's the other way round. I think the people that reviewed it and gave it really high scores played it for four or five hours, thought it was really addictive and didn't carry on.

Dan: No, you can play it for 12 to 14 hours and still think, "is this it?"

Chris: So what's the point in that then?

Dan: But that's what you're saying about the online stuff.

Mark: Anyway, what really maffers is gameplay and it's not very good.

Dan: The gameplay is excellent! I've probably played more *Diablo* than any of you lot put together.

Mark: That's probably true.

Dan: When I first started playing *Diablo II* I was running around and I thought it was shit. The graphics are pants and you can't change the resolution, it's sloppy. It hasn't even got that much gameplay. It's just left-click to kill stuff, but that's all you need.

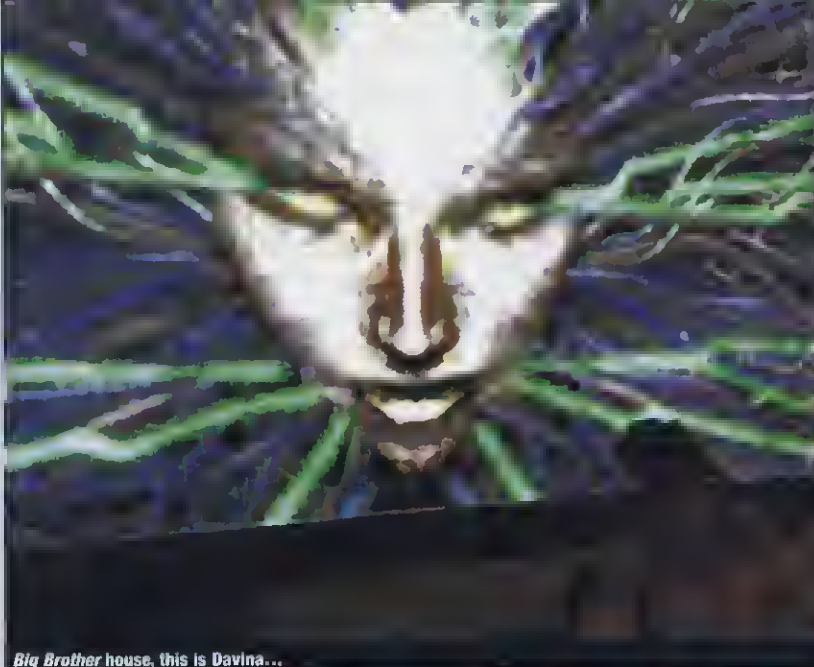
Dave: It's addictive. For the first three or four



DIABLO II

Already one of the best-selling games of all time, *Diablo II* takes the "if it ain't broke don't fix it" philosophy and delivers an action RPG sequel that looks and plays curiously like its predecessor. Think, hack, hack, hack, spell, spell, spell, spell, heal, pick up treasure and save game.

SCORE	72%
DEVELOPER	Blizzard
PUBLISHER	Havas
REVIEWED	PCZ #93



Big Brother house, this is Davina...

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

Dan: What an absolutely brilliant game.

Chris: I suppose it's got a cricket sub-game in there that no one's discovered apart from Martin?

Martin: There are loads of sub-games in here, but the difference is they're good. The thing about *SS2* that makes it so good is the combat. In *Diablo II* you just click your mouse at things. You don't get any control, unlike *SS2*.

Chris: I think the combat's all right, but what I really like is the atmosphere and the tension. It's just amazing and really scary.

Dave: We included it in our scary SuperTest. Everyone thought it was excellent then, how does everyone think it stands up now with *Deus Ex* on the scene?

Dan: It's scarier than *Deus Ex*.

Mallo: It's marginally scarier, but

Mark: But then it wouldn't be anywhere near as scary. The whole point is that you're completely on your own.

Mallo: I still think that at some point you should come across some humans that are alive, maybe making some last stand, it would elevate the game.

Chris: I love games with character interaction, but it never occurred to me once in this game that there should be people there that you should interact with. I loved just picking all those things up that told you what had happened to the people that went before you.

Mallo: But aren't you dying to meet one of them? There's one bit in the game where you look through a window and see a bloke going "urrgggghh", and

whereas in *SS2* you're completely on your own.

Mallo: It's the quiet bits that make it scary and that's why I think *Deus Ex* almost on a par, it's a very quiet game.

Dave: There were two things that annoyed me. The weapon degradation...

Mallo: That didn't get in the way at all.

Dave: Yeah, but you'd pick up a weapon saying damaged, fire it once and it would break. What's the point of that?

Mallo: Yeah, but if you pick up a weapon that's almost about to break, then you've got that added tear.

Dave: I just thought it was a pain in the arse.

Dan: Weapons don't break that easily in real life. You can do all sorts of shit with an AK-47 and it still won't die. But saying that, I think the game's fantastic and little things like that didn't spoil it.

Dave: It didn't spoil it. It just annoyed me.

Dan: Some of the puzzles got on my tits, frankly, because they were just designed to keep you running around from one place to another.

Mallo: That's to make you explore an area of the map.

Dan: But you've already entered the entire area and then you're running around for no reason.

Dave: The other thing I didn't like was the gun turrets. Turrets after turrets.

Dan: Just disable them.

Dave: You can't disable them all. Later on in the game you can't turn them off.

Mallo: Three armour-piercing

bullets, that's all it takes.

Dave: I thought it was a pain in the arse. It's either a zombie or a turret...

Mallo: It's meant to keep you on your toes.

Chris: That's one of the best things about *SS2*, you come to a lot of rooms that you're literally afraid to go into because you know there's going to be major trouble in there.

Mallo: Bits like when you find that bloke on a medical bed and pick up the PDA he's got and listen to the recording.

Martin: It's the only game here where you couldn't relax for a second.

Mallo: Actually, you can. There are certain areas of the game where you can lock yourself in. And what about the flashbacks as well? There's one bit where you walk into a corridor and then you black out and all of a sudden you're in a big flashback floating around this organic room that you come to later in the game. It's brilliant. And what about the monkeys, the tireball-throwing monkeys?

Dave: They were a pain in the arse as well.

Martin: You whinging bastard.

Mallo: You can

hear them screaming in the corridors and you think, "hang on, I'm being frightened by a spider monkey here, what's the matter with me?" And then you get blasted by one and realise why.

Dan: How did those monkeys make the fireballs?

Mallo: They're experiments that have escaped.

Dave: Magic monkeys

Mallo: You notice they've all got their brains exposed.

Dave: Nice. So we all agree, *SS2* is still brilliant.



“One of the best things about it is you come to a lot of rooms that you're literally afraid to go into”

CHRIS ON *SYSTEM SHOCK 2*

you really want to talk to him but he just goes running off.

Chris: It probably would have been better but I still think it's a brilliant game, it didn't affect my enjoyment.

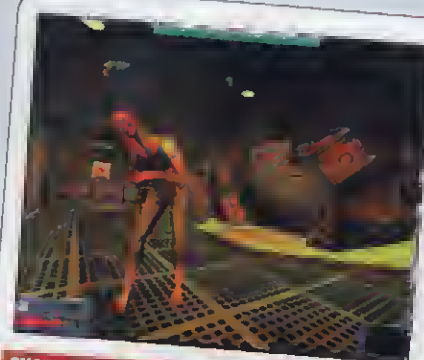
Mallo: I'd rate it somewhere in the 90s now.

Chris: It's definitely still worth it.

Dan: What makes it scarier than *Deus Ex* is that in *Deus Ex* you know you've got loads of people behind you, like the agency,



I think *Deus Ex* has a slightly better engine, storyline and a better way of working, but *SS2* is still absolutely fantastic and totally intuitive to play. There's a great selection of weapons, it's very scary, and it makes brilliant use of lights and environments. The only thing I've got a problem with is the lack of human character interaction.



SYSTEM SHOCK 2

Well over a year old now, but still as incredibly compelling as it was on its release, *System Shock 2* pits you against the world in one of the scariest games ever to come to the PC. Don't believe us? Then play it with all the lights off and a meaty pair of headphones turned right up and see what you get.

SCORE	91%
DEVELOPER	Looking Glass
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
REVIEWED	PCZ #80



Planescape: Torment: the darkest game in the Supertest and still the best RPG from the Black Isle stable.

PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

Chris: It's my favourite game in this Supertest.

Dave: What about *Deus Ex*?

Chris: I think I'm going to like *DE* more than *SS2* in the end because it's got more character interaction. But there's one thing that *Deus Ex* hasn't got that this has – a sense of humour.

Mallo: What? Of course it has!

Dan: When you walk into the female bogs and get told not to let yourself and the agency down. You get a mouthful. It's hilarious.

Chris: But not to the same extent. *Planescape* has the best storytelling system out of all the games here and that's what I like.

Mallo: *Deus Ex* has a

fantastic storytelling system.

Chris: You can spend hours talking to characters, finding out about different parts of the game, different places and different characters. It's amazing. You can spend ages on one character and there are so many characters in the game.

Mallo: In *Deus Ex*, you can walk into a bar and there are two people having a chat. One of them goes on for more than five minutes about the state of the world. There's so much extraneous information in the game you wouldn't believe it. You can talk to literally everyone, explore every

conversation. There are newspapers lying around everywhere, comics and magazines everywhere. A lot of people think it's a shoot 'em up, but it's much more than that.

Chris: I'm talking about *Planescape* and people are taking everything I say and comparing it to *Deus Ex*.

Mallo: You criticised *Deus Ex*.

Chris: I didn't.

Mallo: You just did! You said *Planescape: Torment* has got something that *Deus Ex* hasn't and you're wrong. I've probably played *PT* more than you've played *DE*.

Everyone: Ooooooh
Dave: The difference between the two is that *Planescape* is dialogue-driven. The whole game is dialogue.

Chris: And that's what I like.

Dan: *Planescape's* like *Deus Ex* in that your actions earlier on in the game will come back and have repercussions later on. You've got a lot of choice, whether you're going to be a good guy or a bad guy and later on a character comes back that you've completely forgotten about and either helps you or beats you up.

Mark: I think *PT* has got to be the best-scripted game I've ever played in my life.

Dave: I'd agree.

Mark: It was in a book form, I'd actually read all of it.

Dave: No you wouldn't. We got all those books and you turned your nose up at them.

Mark: That's because it wasn't the game in book form. It was just some bloke and his wife writing something completely unconnected.

Dan: *Planescape: Torment* is really engrossing as well. It's very dark, out of all the games it's the darkest.

Dave: It's more a traditional role-playing game. You end up with a few characters and go off on quests. I wouldn't normally play this sort of game – you know, go over there, meet that bard, play the lute and kill the dragon. But it's dark, twisted and the story's brilliant and funny.

Martin: It's really versatile.

You can change your class halfway, though.

Dan: Well, you can't change your class. You can't say "I'm going to be good and help grannies across the road."

Mark: You can change your class any time you want.

Dan: I played the game completely differently then.

Mark: If you're a fighter you can change...

Dan: Yeah, yeah, but in terms of alignment, like lawful good, chaotic...

Mark: Yeah, that depends on how you act.

Dan: I was trying to be a lawful evil character, which is really hard to be.

Mallo: You can be lawful evil in *Deus Ex*.

Mark: Oh, shut up!

Chris: I'm not saying that *PT* is a better game than *DE*. I'm just saying it's more my type of game than any of the others. As Mark said, it's a well-scripted game with the best story. I've never played any game ever with the

Mallo: You must have played loads of AD&D-based games over the years.

Chris: Yeah, but I didn't play them with that in mind. I just played them as RPGs. I got an email from someone about my *Icewind Dale* review. I was complaining about the spell system, saying it should have been mana-based and he said that I'd missed the point because it was based on AD&D rules.

I want a game to be a good RPG, I don't care whether it's got AO&O underneath it or not.

Dan: AD&D back in the '80s was the most popular RPG going.

Mallo: It's still one of the most popular campaign settings now.

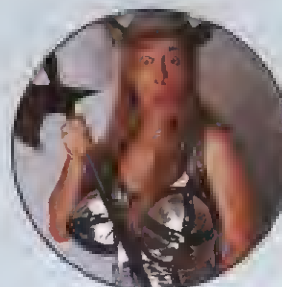
Chris: That doesn't necessarily make for good gameplay.

Dave: Of course it does, because it's been balanced over years and years of trial and error. It does equal good gameplay because it's been refined.

Chris: It's been refined in a

"It's really engrossing. It's very dark, out of all the games here it's definitely the darkest"

OAN ON PLANESCAPE: TORMENT



completely different way to the way PC games have been refined. People don't want to cast one spell and then sleep for 24 hours to recover. How can people memorise a spell, cast it once, forget it and go to sleep to memorise it? That's the way RPGs used to be, but they've moved on.

Dave: If I stayed awake for 48 hours, I wouldn't know how to turn someone into a frog.

Mallo: What about if you slept too much and you woke up groggy?

Dave: You'd be like, "now what was it, wing of toad, erm..."



PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

From the same stable as *Baldur's Gate* and in our opinion by far the strongest Black Isle game to date. This is the best in old skool role-playing action, with the emphasis set firmly on the strong and often very witty, dialogue, and the tried-and-tested AD&D rulebook propping up the rear.

87%

SCORE
DEVELOPER
PUBLISHER
REVIEWED

Black Isle
Interplay
PCZ #87

DEUS EX

Mallo: Where do you want me to start?

Dave: Before you start, we don't want you ruining the storyline for the readers, like Mark did with *System Shock 2* a few months back.

Mallo: I'm not going to give anything away. I played it for about four weeks and it got better and better, with surprise after surprise. Every time I thought it had finished, there'd be loads more levels. There are three different endings...

Everyone: Shhh

Mallo: ...that have been widely talked about, but each one's hugely different. One's quite easy and quite poignant. It you go for the second one, it opens up a whole new section of the game that you've got to explore. The other route opens up a new section as well, so it's not just like three endings from the same part of the game. All the way through there's just surprise after surprise after surprise. Everyone should play it. There's some amazingly sick stuff to do as well.

Dave: Like what?

Mallo: Like throwing bodies out of penthouse apartment windows. They splat on the floor and you see all the police run towards them. Kill people, shoot pigeons, the lot. Everything you're not

allowed to do in real life, you can do in *Deus Ex*. Keep crime off the streets.

Martin: Everything Mallo's said about the endings is true for the rest of the game as well. You can shoot your way through it or creep through it. Then you've got all the Thief elements as well, so it you knock someone out you can't just leave their bodies lying around because someone will raise the alarm. It's got great replayability as well...

Dave: The thing about replayability is that you've got to be pretty sad or the game's got to be pretty damn good to play it any more than once.

Mallo: I've played through most of it twice through. I've played the first half twice, and the last half quite a lot because I keep going back to play different sections.

Dave: I like it because it's believable. In *PT* you don't believe it because you know you're not in a dungeon with some floating skull following you round.

Chris: Well, how's *DE* believable when you've got giant robots wandering around?

Dave: Well, you only have to suspend your disbelief for a bit.

Chris: The other thing I like it for, like *PT*, is character interaction. It doesn't happen enough in games and the reason it doesn't happen is not because the developers can't be bothered, it's just that there are so few people who are good at it. That's why you never see it. With *PT*, you can quite easily talk for hours and hours before you even do anything. Normally with these games you play to get to the next bit, and are happy to get there. But in *PT* could quite easily talk for hours and not go anywhere.

Mallo: *Deus Ex* is the same...
Chris: ...and that's why, it they make a *Planescape Torment 2*, they shouldn't add speech. It should still be text.

Mallo: With *Deus Ex*, you've got a



Deus Ex: you simply have to play it. No, honestly...

massive landscape that's totally populated – there's market places, a little temple with monks, police everywhere, schoolgirls wandering the streets. I don't know if you've noticed all the schoolgirls wandering the streets?

Everyone: (Silence)

Mallo: You can go off on tangents with people. Just by approaching people – with no real consequence in the game – you can get useful information. And, especially in Hong Kong, there are some really mad conversations about existentialism. Unbelievable stuff.

Dan: Is there anything about *Deus Ex* you don't like? I think we know what you like about it by now.

Mallo: It has got some faults. If you're backing towards the edge of a level, and you're shooting at something, when the level loads, you're facing the other direction and you walk back into the other level again.

The other annoying thing is if you've got a full inventory and you're trying to pick up a body you have to empty your inventory, take what they're carrying and drop it before picking the body up.

Mark: What do you think about the enemy AI? I think that it's pretty poor.

Mallo: It depends on what level you play it on.

Mark: You played it on easy! **Mallo:** The first time round. And I didn't have any real problems. There were a few instances where you'd shoot someone and others don't react. Not all the time, just occasionally.

Mark: On medium, sometimes someone would see something happen, run off and then just

go straight back into the same routine again.

Mallo: If they see a body, they'll run towards it and set the alarms off. The pluses far outweigh the minuses.

Mark: Anyway, if the AI was perfect on the easy level the game would be impossible.

You'd go in somewhere, shoot someone and then 500 people would come after you.

Mallo: I think the easy level is still quite difficult. I don't think they should have called it 'easy', it should have been 'normal'. The

everywhere, they will hear you.

Dave: And you've got to remember that sounds in the game are really pronounced for effect. If you're walking on a path and a guard's about ten to 15 metres away, then he's not necessarily going to hear you in real life, unless you're on gravel or something. Forget the fact that you've cranked the sound up as far as it will go on your flash new surround speakers.

Mark: I think it's completely revolutionary. It's just blown apart the way we think about

“It's completely revolutionary. It's just blown apart the way we think of computer games”

MARK ON *DEUS EX*



easy is not really easy at all.

Chris: It depends how they adjust the difficulty level. Sometimes, easy level means you do more damage with your bullets, not necessarily that the AI is toned down.

Mallo: On realistic level, all the guards have acute senses. They'll hear you or see you much more easily.

Chris: Well they don't on the medium level that's for sure. You go right up to one with a big gun and he just doesn't see you until you shoot. But then I suppose it would be too difficult otherwise.

Mallo: They react to footsteps, which is why you have to crawl everywhere. If you walk around

computer games, because usually everything is so straightforward and everything is limited to the how the designers decide to let you do things. But in *Deus Ex*, the freedom is absolutely unbelievable, you can just do what you want.

Chris: I think *DE* is really good for the genre because loads of people are going to want to play it. It is hi-tech, it's got guns, blah, blah, blah.

Dave: Most people aren't going to see it as a role-playing game. They're going to view it as a first-person *Hidden & Dangerous*-style stealth 'em up, which is good. It's going to get people into different types of games.

Dan: That's it for *Deus Ex*, we all love it. Next!



DEUS EX

Warren Spector is responsible for some of the best RPGs ever, and his latest pushes the boundaries even further. A heady mix of stealth, action, pure role-playing, multiple paths and an extremely strong story make this one of the most believable PC games to date. We dare you not to play it.

SCORE	94%
DEVELOPER	Ion Storm
PUBLISHER	Eidos
REVIEWED	PCZ #93



Final Fantasy VIII: the dreaded three-headed console conversion strikes again.

FINAL FANTASY VIII

Chris: (Snores)

Everyone: (Laughs)

Chris: Well, thinking about it, shouldn't we be doing *FFVII* if we think it's better?

Dave: We should do *FFVIII* because that's what everyone's played for the Supertest. They're pretty identical anyway, so *VIII* it is.

Mark: But *VII* has something that *VIII* doesn't, charm.

Dave: True, but for the Supertest we're going to do *VIII*.

Chris: OK. *FFVIII*. I don't think this game should be on PC.

Martin: This is the weakest game here. The in-game graphics are pitiful – they look like they've been scraped straight from the console.

Dan: That's not true.

Dave: They've improved them a bit.

Dan: They're still crap,

although the FMV is tantastic.

Martin: But the in-game graphics look diabolical. They should have been a lot better.

Dave: Yeah, when you get out into the world you have to sail across the sea in something that looks like an apple turnover.

Chris: I thought it was an apple turnover.

Martin: I fail to see any real gameplay. You just walk around for hours trying to find out where you're going.

Dave: Jesus, you're slaughtering it.

Chris: The thing about the *FF* games is that everyone goes on about the storylines. Bollocks to that. Either they really miss something when they translate them from the Japanese text, or

else they're just completely shit. It's full of the most embarrassing conversations I've ever had in my life.

Dave: But you loved *FFVII*. **Chris:** I loved the game, but it was overacted. The things they say are so cringey.

Mark: I think there is a lot of bad translation.

Chris: People say they've played the *FF* games and it's made them cry. That makes me cry.

Mallo: I played *FF* on a Gameboy and that almost made me cry.

Everyone: (Laughs)

Mallo: The designers have a knack for getting some sort of weird empathy in there. I don't know what it is. They're not afraid to kill characters off.

Dave: Like the character in *FFVII* who gets a sword put through her.

Chris: You don't cry when someone with a pointy nose gets killed. It's a good thing.

Dan: Pointy noses? There are no characters with pointy noses.

Martin: And in *FFVIII* hardly anyone gets killed. They seem to get knocked out and reappear later in the game.

Dave: It's true. I think they toned down a lot of what was good in *FFVII*. It just wasn't in *FFVIII*.

Mallo: The music's always good as well.

Dave: It's abysmal.

Chris: I was sitting beside Dave when he was reviewing it and I got sick of it. It never changes. The same music goes on forever.

Dave: He nearly hit me and it wasn't my fault. I was just reviewing the game.

Mark: The interface is dreadful as well.

Dave: I was stuck in the tutorial screen for an hour. It's not designed for PC – all the keys are completely wrong for Windows.

Martin: The development of the characters is pathetic and I'll tell you why.

Chris: (Laughs) Oh Christ.

Martin: When you leave the cities you get attacked by all these stupid monsters and get loads of experience points. If you want to build your characters up really quickly, you just walk around and have loads of fights. Then your characters are really powerful and before you know it no one can touch you.

Mark: And the stupid monsters. There's a cactus that bounces on your head. It's pathetic.

Mallo: But in a way you need to do this to build your characters up. I don't think twice about spending six hours fighting the same monsters over and over again.

Martin: But watching those bloody animations over and over again.

Chris: When you see the spells the first time...

Dan: Yeah, but after the seventh time watching stupid planets going around and around, it gets tiring, don't you think?

Martin: Yeah.

Mallo: Turn-based combat is just as valid as real-time combat.

Dan: That's not the point I'm making, it's the fact that you've got to watch these spells...

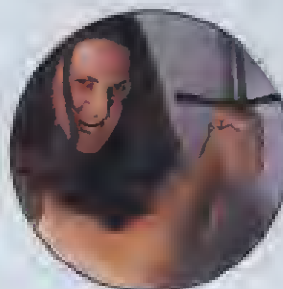
Martin: That go on and on.

Chris: What were they thinking, not to let you escape out of the animations?

Dan: I'd rather jam a knitting needle up my arse.

Dave: Well, they had to buy 60,000 workstations to render all the FMV and they thought after that they'd make sure we all had to sit through the animations.

Mallo: 60,000 workstations?



Dave: No, that's an exaggeration **Chris:** Anyway, has anyone got anything good to say about this game?

Dave: There's no PC support and that's a real problem.

Mallo: It's lazy.

Dave: When you're in an interface screen, you'd normally press escape to get out, but not here. Because it's a console-mapped game, you have to press 'e' or 'w'.

I spent an hour in the tutorial with this twat (motioning to Chris) next to me saying, "Can't you get out of a tutorial screen?" And it would take them a day to change this.

Mark: It does affect the gameplay a lot. It's just not intuitive. You have to think about everything.

Chris: The problem with this game is that there are too many 'ifs': if there weren't constant battles going on all the time that you didn't want; if you could escape out of the animations you didn't want to watch a million times; if they had proper mouse support. It could be a brilliant game if there wasn't all these 'ifs'.

Dave: You're doing a Keegan. It would be a good game if it was a good game.

Chris: But it has got the most amazing FMV.

Dave: It has, but this doesn't replace all the bad things.

Dan: And I think the FMV works better on a console anyway.

Watch it on a big screen and your mates are impressed. Show them on a monitor and it's like, "yeah?"

Mallo: The saving problem is just a console hangover as well. I don't know about anyone else, but I'm an obsessive saver.

"The in-game graphics are pitiful – they look like they've been scraped straight from the console"

MARTIN ON FINAL FANTASY VIII

Dave: In a great game you don't mind going back and doing it all again. In *FFVIII*, if you have to go back and try to walk from A to B and dodge the same monsters, it's the most boring thing you're ever likely to see in your life.

Chris: You gave it 82 per cent?

Dave: But of course that's just one aspect of the game, however...

Everyone: (Laughs)

Dave: In fact, I would highly recommend *FFVIII* to anyone.



FINAL FANTASY VIII

When will it end? The *Final Fantasy* series has a massive fan base, but unless the developers radically alter the formula – which is becoming increasingly stale – then it's going to shrink. Repetitive combat and console hangovers shroud a deep story and the superlative trademark FMV.

SCORE	79%
DEVELOPER	Squaresoft
PUBLISHER	Eidos
REVIEWED	PCZ #87

VAMPIRE

Chris: I don't know what to say about this because I hailed it as the best game of all time and since then I've nearly finished it and I've changed my mind.

Mallo: I've played *Vampire* loads and, at first, it was far too beardy-weirdy for my liking. The Prague section was full of really OTT dialogue, you know, "yea, verily" sort of stuff. The interface and the combat are OK but nothing special. If I was reviewing it I don't think I'd have given it 80 per cent.

Chris: I'd give it more than that, and there's loads of reasons why. The voiceovers and acting in *Vampire* is better than anything I've ever seen.

Mallo: It's not quite there though.

Chris: People always go on about graphics as well, saying they're not that important. I think they're more important now than ever and it's probably the best looking game in the Supertest.

Dave: Hmmm. I probably agree with you. *Deus Ex* looks great, but it's definitely not as rich as *Vampire*.



Mallo: It's incredibly closed, though. It's got loads of really nice-looking environments, but it's nowhere near as good or open-ended as *Deus Ex*.

Chris: You see, that's what I don't like about it, it's way too linear. I expected it to have a lot more depth. Things like the spell system, I was expecting to be able to control the monsters more effectively with stun or area effect spells, but the emphasis seems to be more on standard combat. I don't think it takes away from the overall experience though. I would have given it 89 per cent, but I don't think it's a classic.

Mallo: Parts of the game are really exciting, like the bit where you're fighting the golem in the street – you've got this huge stone monster running after you. Running away from it, trying to find somewhere to hide and take

stock of the situation, and realising you can't – it's scary.

Chris: That's just it. That's how it's different to other games. You look at monsters in other games and they just look plain stupid, and you don't get immersed in it.

Mallo: They should have turned it into a *Diablo II*-type game, a bit more open-ended, with a perspective. It doesn't need to be spinny-rotatey; I think the spinny-rotatey angle actually hurts it.

Mark: It is a *Diablo II*-type game.

Mallo: And the AI pissed me off. I'd have party members running off and attacking innocent people.

Mark: I didn't have that once. All you have to do is set them to do what you want. You can have them on aggressive or...

Mallo: It might have been a bug in the version I played.

Dave: You played the beta version.

Chris: I'm going to do that. Next time I say something wrong I'm just going to say, "but I played the beta version".

Everyone: (Laughs)

Mark: That's what happened

"The AI pissed me off. I'd have party members running off and attacking innocent people"

MALLO ON VAMPIRE

with *Diablo II*. The football sub-game.

Chris: What are you on?

Mark: I loved it when I was playing it. I was aware of lots of flaws in it and I was disappointed in some bits because I was expecting something different. After I'd seen the screenshots and saw what it was about I wasn't expecting *Diablo* in 3D. It's extremely linear, but I got swept up in the storyline.

Mallo: There were a couple of things in the game that really annoyed me, like you're walking down this row of trees and you can see a path going off in one direction and you think, "I'll go and explore that", but you can't get anywhere near it. There's an invisible barrier stopping you exploring the bits you want to explore.

Chris: I was a bit disappointed that there were people that were wandering around who were just



Vampire: simply the best, if you're looking for beauty that isn't much more than skin deep.

part of the scenery. Like *Diablo II*, there are people who are just non-entities that you can't go up and interact with.

Mallo: It reminded me of a cross between *Diablo II* and *Daggerfall* because it's got some deep role-playing elements in terms of buying and selling items, and I quite like that, but I think that next to two or three of the other games here, it's looking dated already.

Dave: They could have done a lot more with it, definitely.

Chris: Yeah, but there are lots of things that rescue it as far as I'm concerned. But it's got nowhere near the depth I thought it would have before I played it.

Dave: The weapons you can pick up later on, like the chainguns and shotguns, don't work too well.

Mallo: They should maybe have gone into first-person like *Deus Ex*.

Chris: I don't think they should even have gone into that time period, because it was totally at odds with the rest of it.

Mallo: But it fits in with the *Vampire* campaign setting because the London part of the game is based on the fact that there's a *Vampire* leader who was killed and buried under the foundations of Centrepont before it was built.

Dave: The London in the game is authentic with the *Vampire* role-playing world.

Chris: Which is completely unauthentic.

Mallo: I went to see them and said, "Is this London?" and they were like, "Yeah, what's wrong with it?" And I said, "Victorian lights and cobbled streets for

Tottenham Court Road. And where's Centrepont?" And they asked if I could send them a photograph.

Everyone: (Laughs)

Mark: I think *Vampire* suffers from being too ambitious and halfway through they realised they couldn't do the game they wanted to do. The graphics are too good for in-depth gameplay.

Mallo: Why?

Mark: What you were saying about the invisible walls. PCs we've got now wouldn't be able to cope with a real city looking like that.

Mallo: Look at *Deus Ex*. It slows down, but even in Hong Kong or New York you can see these massive environments.

Dave: *Deus Ex* had the advantage of using a solid engine that's been in development for three or four years.

Mallo: Hold on, the guy that runs Nihilistic was the chief coder of the *Jedi Knights* engine. They're no slouches when it comes to 3D engines.

Chris: There's nothing wrong with the engine. But the amount of detail they've put in, it would take ages. I agree with Mark, they were too ambitious.

Dave: The biggest disappointment

for me in the game, and I know it's authentic to the *Vampire* board game, but the ideal *Vampire* role-playing game for me would be dark and scary. It wouldn't be based on this version of the myth.

Mallo: *Vampire*'s politics are a bit too heavy for me as well. There are lots of politics involved and you need to know the *Vampire* campaign setting to understand it.

Dave: And it's a really obscure game, isn't it?

Mallo: It's actually the second most popular game after AD&D.

Dave: So that's 13 people playing it, then?



VAMPIRE

Nihilistic's epic is one of the best-looking games on the PC and if you're looking for payback after splashing out your hard-earned dosh on a new graphics card then look no further than *Vampire*. Although, not as deep as we thought it was going to be, *Vampire* is an excellent *Diablo*-style hackfest nonetheless.

SCORE	89%
DEVELOPER	Nihilistic
PUBLISHER	Activision
REVIEWED	PCZ #92

TO THE STARS

Goodbye goblins, hello rayguns. Online RPGs face the future

Online role-playing is huge. Thousands of role-players dial in and millions of dollars come out of their bank accounts. However, there isn't much available right now, unless you're into goblins and orcs. If you're a sci-fi fan eager to roll virtual dice across the Internet, you won't find much in either *EverQuest* or *Ultima Online*, two of the biggest online RPGs on the planet. But times are a changing. By the end of the year, *Anarchy Online* should be available, offering RPG fans the chance to get into alien costumes and use nano-technology rather than

magic. On the action side of things is *Neocron*, a first-person action game with heavy role-playing elements (dare we lay comparisons with *Deus Ex*?). Finally, of course, the daddy of science fiction will arrive – next year, we hope – in the form of *Star Wars Online*, allowing us all to lob thermal detonators around the deserts of Tatooine and the glaciers of Hoth with gay abandon. The best thing is that it's from the makers of *EverQuest*. If you want to know more, stay tuned into our Online section for regular updates.



Forget the chatlines, it's RPGs that are going to be running up your phone bill in the future.

THE ALSO-RANS

We picked the six best RPGs to look at in this Supertest, but there are many others...

THE GOOD...

As well as *Planescape: Torment*, Black Isle is also responsible for two other rock solid RPGs, *Baldur's Gate* and *Icwind Dale*. If you're looking for more of the same, then both of these games are well worth the asking price.



Icwind Dale: not the huge leap forward we were hoping for.



Might & Magic VIII: it's not good.

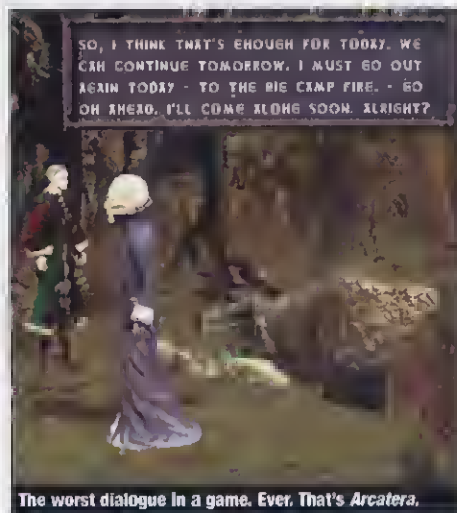
THE BAD AND...

Might & Magic VIII was reviewed last issue and it is as good a game as any to illustrate just how bad RPGs can be if they are coded by the wrong hands.

When you install it you'll find yourself asking where the developer has actually been for the past five years. If really is anyone's guess.

THE DOWNRIGHT LAUGHABLE

It takes a lot to get the whole of the PC ZONE office around a monitor and in hysterics, but *Arcatera* managed it. It's one of the most risible titles we've installed in the past few years, but if you see it in the bargain bin for £5 or under it might be worth buying for the comedy value alone.



The worst dialogue in a game. Ever. That's *Arcatera*.

AND THE WINNER IS...

In the harsh world of the Supertest, there can be only one

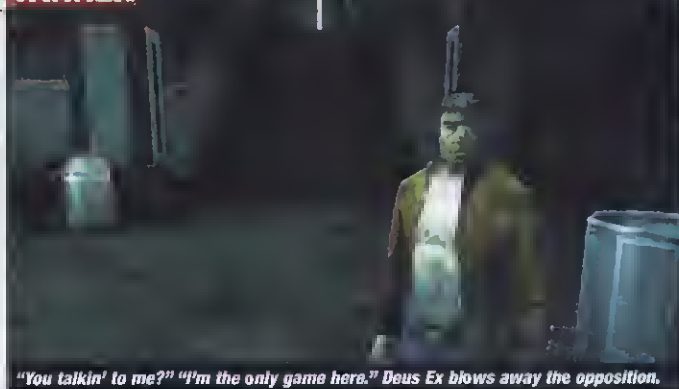
If you've read through the heated debate you'll already know the answer to this question. The words *Deus* and *Ex* cropped up everywhere, and the general consensus is that it's taken the RPG to a new level. Mark called it "revolutionary", Mallo "amazingly slick" and Dave "believable". Everyone should buy it.

Chris was the only dissenting voice, so no surprise there. His house parties resemble the opening shot of this piece and while everyone else disrobed as

soon as the photographer had finished, Chris was spotted later that evening running down Oxford Street wand in hand. His favourite was *Planescape: Torment*, which is a more traditional role-playing game and most people's second choice.

Of the rest, *System Shock 2* and *Vampire* still hold their charm, *Diablo II* was criticised by everyone apart from Dan, and the *Final Fantasy* boys and girls have just got to try harder.

OVERALL WINNER



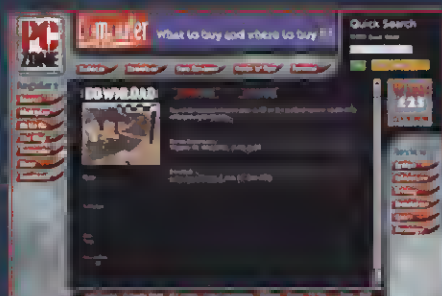
"You talkin' to me?" "I'm the only game here." *Deus Ex* blows away the opposition.

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FEEDBACK

Generally you're a discontented lot this month, but at least *Deus Ex* is adding some joy to your lives. *Martin Korda* listens to your complaints and compliments



IT'S YOUR SHOUT!

Feedback is here to offer you, the player, a platform to voice your opinions on any of the games reviewed in *PC ZONE* over the last three months. Whether you want to sling a game's praises or simply give it a verbal beating, we want to hear from you. Remember to keep your comments between 50 and 150 words and include your name, address and age.

WRITE TO Feedback, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF

E-MAIL Alternatively, e-mail them to us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with 'Feedback' in the subject line.

WE WANT YOUR REVIEWS WIN A SUPER SCOOTER!



That's right. We have five trendy new scooters to give away (each worth £1,500), and we're giving you the chance to get a review published in *PC ZONE*.

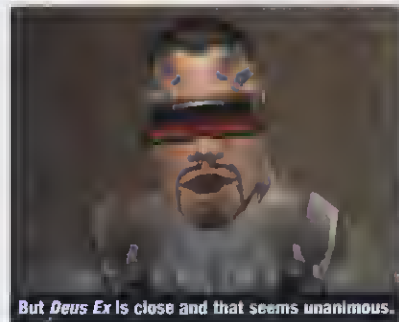
Just send your usual Feedback comments, along with a 300-word review of any game you fancy (clearly marked 'review'), to the following e-mail address: editor@pczone.co.uk. We'll pick the best review, publish it and send a scooter to the winner. All the usual competition rules apply, and you must be over 18 to qualify for entry. Any winning review must be of sufficient quality to be printed and the prize carries over to the next month if there is no winner.

READER REVIEW OF THE MONTH

Here's our second compo winner, but keep those entries coming, because there are still scooters up for grabs



Half-Life still probably shades it.



But *Deus Ex* is close and that seems unanimous.

It must have been about two years ago now that I first saw *Half-Life*. My world changed. I remember being stunned even as I watched, or actually took part in, the intro sequence – and it got better from there. Everybody knows about it, so I won't go on.

Everybody also knows that it's two years old and in all that time nothing has approached it. But now *Deus Ex* is the game to do just that.

I'm not going to enthuse about the brilliant atmosphere, the huge levels, the excellent weapons, the perfect inventory, the clever character progression system, the necessity for stealth and intelligence, the clever use of sound and the realism both of the physics, the technology and the living, breathing world which you will find yourself in. I won't go on about the plot, the graphics, the gameplay, or the simply incredible way that your actions directly influence the outcome, or the fact that there are many ways to achieve the objective. I've already said *Deus Ex* is comparable to *Half-Life*, so all that is kind of assumed. Instead, I will talk about the bad things, which are:

1 In *Half-Life* even the cut-scenes that you see from Freeman's eyes make you believe that you really were him. In *Deus Ex*, you're continually seeing JC Denton from an external camera, so it's more like watching a film.

2 It's possible to play the game on settings other than 'Realistic'. Don't do it, not even the first time through. And don't turn the brightness on your monitor up, either. Atmosphere is everything in this game, don't throw it away.

That's it though, I have no other complaints. *Deus Ex* is a masterpiece of computer game creation. I just hope it doesn't take two years before another game this good comes along.

Andy Patrick

VERDICT

93%

ICEWIND DALE

REVIEWED #93, *PCZ* September
SCORE 75%

What we said

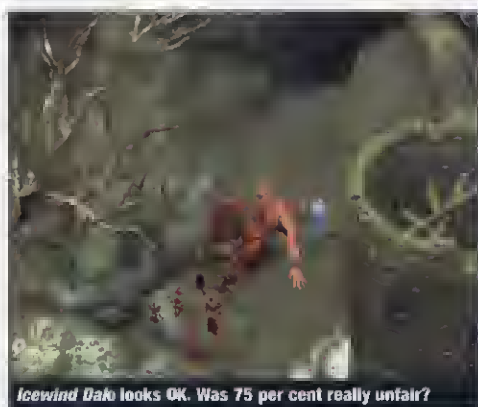
"It is by no means a bad game. Indeed, it can be very engrossing once your characters level up a bit. But it most certainly is not the next step beyond *Baldur's Gate* as we were led to believe in the run-up to its release."

What you said

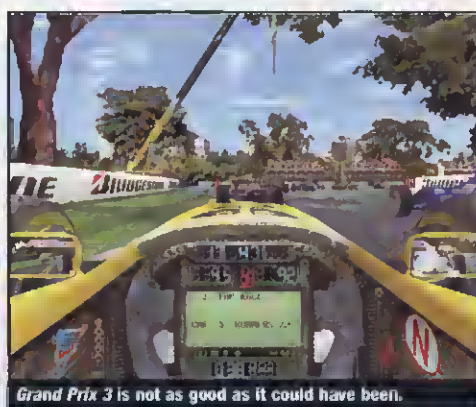
★ "As a recently cured *EverQuest* addict, I purchased both *Diablo II* and *Icewind Dale*. As much as I agree with the review of *Diablo II*, I think that *Icewind Dale* deserved a much higher score. By the time you're halfway through, you'll find you won't want the game to end because the storyline is so absorbing. It's a highly polished standalone game and I'd have given it 80 per cent, at least."

Mike Bates

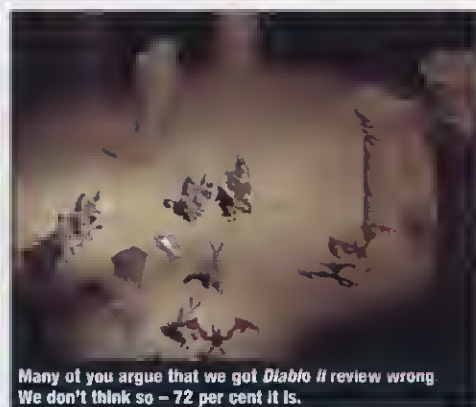
★ "In your boxout 'Spellbound', you harp on about how crap the magic system is, even saying 'Black Isle: try harder'. Do you actually have any idea what you're



Icewind Dale looks OK. Was 75 per cent really unfair?



Grand Prix 3 is not as good as it could have been.



Many of you argue that we got Diablo II review wrong. We don't think so - 72 per cent it is.

talking about? The system you slag off has been the mainstay of the D&D/AD&D system since its conception in the '70s. What's the point of saying they shouldn't have used the AD&D system? If Black Isle hadn't used it, then there'd be no point to the game? *Baldur's Gate* and *Icewind Dale* are based on the world's largest fantasy campaign setting, the Forgotten Realms, which revolves around the AD&D system. So, you want them to change that, do you?"

Harv B

Comment

Five per cent hardly constitutes a much higher score now, does it? Although, admittedly, it would have pushed the game into the Award For Excellence category. Essentially, the problem that we had with *ID* was it showed no real improvements over *Baldur's Gate*. Yes it's a great game and the story - an essential part of any RPG is superb, but the game itself isn't a step forward from titles that were being released more than a year ago.

As for the AD&D issue, check the Supertest for Chris' full counter argument. In essence, we think that behind the scenes rules shouldn't get in the way of flowing gameplay. We know that AD&D is a popular campaign setting, but we still think that *Black Isle* could've made the spell-casting part more interesting, and a mana system would've been one way of doing this.

DEUS EX

REVIEWED #93, PCZ
September
SCORE 94%

What we said

Z "A game that has just leaptrogged *System Shock 2* as the current benchmark in the role-playing genre."

What you said

★ "What an unbelievable game. I've been looking forward to it for ages and was over the moon when I finally got hold of a copy. Combine some of the best elements from *Half-Life*, *System Shock 2* and *Thief*, and what do you get? *Deus Ex*. I'm only part way through it at the moment, but it's already one of my favourite games. *Deus Ex*? Actually, more like better than sex."

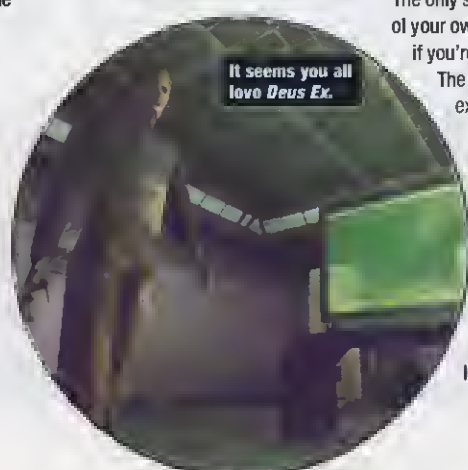
AC

★ "Right then, where to start? The phrase better than *Half-Life* is one I have never had to use until now. *Deus Ex* is not only better than *Half-Life*, but one of the best games I can ever remember playing. Right from the beginning, it sucks you in and doesn't let you go. Each level is hugely atmospheric and the storyline is thoroughly engrossing. *Deus Ex* also has some truly unique features, such as allowing you to upgrade your weapons and abilities. *Deus Ex* is original, interesting and brilliant to play as well as ultra realistic. What more could anyone want from a game?"

Carl Stubbings

Comment

There's not a huge amount that we can say here. *Deus Ex* is the best game since *Half-Life*, and it appears you all love it just as much as we do. With the industry producing games of this quality, we have a lot to look forward to in the future.



It seems you all love Deus Ex.

GP3

REVIEWED #94, PCZ October
SCORE 80%

What we said

PCZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE "GP3 is undoubtedly excellent, but it could have been so much better. In terms of realism and accuracy, it has no equal, but it's not the huge leap forward from *GP2* that we were all hoping for."

What you said

★ "I've just bought *GP3* and I have to admit I'm a bit disappointed, especially with the graphics. The cars' handling and physics are great, and Geoff Crammond should be applauded for making the most realistic F1 game ever. His team's dedication

"Your DI review was suspect. You attack the graphics, after previously saying that it's the gameplay that counts, not the graphics"

MATTHEW MERRY ON *DIABLO II*

to recreating the feel of F1 racing has paid off, and is just what the public want after playing so many obviously rushed games. However, surely more time could have been spent on making the game look a little better."

Scoops

★ "After buying *GP3* this morning, I'm writing to say what a pile of cack it is. The graphics are crap and don't even look as if they're being generated by D3D. The only sound you hear is that of your own car making it feel as if you're racing on your own.

The atmosphere is non-existent. There also seems to be a bug in the force feedback support, and I never feel as though I'm in control of the car. I'm taking this crap right back to the shop and exchanging it for a decent game like *Shogun*."

Matthew Want

Comment

It seems that the general reaction to *GP3* is one of great disappointment, with many of you reflecting the criticisms in our review. Matthew, although the majority of your points are valid, perhaps you're being a little harsh about the game. Because, despite its failings, it's still the most accurate F1 sim we've ever seen, and we're sure that many GP enthusiasts will enjoy it, even though they may feel a little let down by its lack of atmosphere and new features. Also, while some of the graphics aren't exactly the most imaginative, the actual circuits and cars are, for the most part, well-animated and beautifully rendered.

DIABLO II

REVIEWED #93, PCZ September
SCORE 72%

What we said

"Despite all the criticisms, if *Diablo II* is essentially the same game with knobs on, it can't be all that bad - and it isn't. The gameplay is still as undemandingly addictive as ever. But, for all that this sequel has added, there is still something sorely missing. It has no sense of atmosphere and feels more like a heartless expansion pack."

What you said

★ "I've always considered *PC ZONE* reviews to be well balanced because they always weigh up the good and bad points of a game. But, unfortunately, your review of *Diablo II* was not up to scratch. Your main focus of attack were the graphics. I mean, come on, what were you expecting? Also, there was no mention of the great light sourcing which causes moving

shadows. I distinctly remember walking into some of the lombs and being impressed by the moving shadows. I feel that you have let yourselves down by printing a review, which is simply pants. And 72 per cent? I really think it deserves better."

Richard Frosztega

★ "I can't believe what you said about *Diablo II*. You say the game isn't innovative. That might be true, but look at what you gave *C&C: Tiberian Sun*, the biggest pile of crap Westwood's ever produced. If you gave that 82 per cent, then surely *Diablo II* should have got at least 80 per cent. In fact, your whole review was suspect, you make a huge fuss about the graphics being rubbish, after previously remarking that it's the gameplay that counts and not graphics. It's more than a little schizophrenic. Oh well, that's what you get if you let a man who doesn't know which part of his body he would enhance review a great game like this. Although it might only be a start, enhancing his brain might just give him some insight and intelligence."

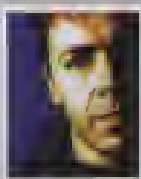
Matthew Merry

Comment

Well you're entitled to your opinion and if sales figures are anything to go by you're in good company. We know there are people out there who swear by *Diablo II* - over a million people can't be wrong. But our score reflects a pretty united front in the office. We don't think it's enough to release what's essentially an add-on pack and proclaim it as a full-blown sequel. If you're honest you'll agree that the graphics are pretty poor and, as gamers who pay hundreds of pounds for new 3D cards, we have every right to demand top quality visuals as well as excellent gameplay. We never said *Diablo II* is rubbish, and under our new scoring system 72 per cent is a respectable score. Honest. [E]

EVER AND EVER

★ ONLINE EDITOR Richie Shoemaker



Now you may not be aware of this but the professional games critic you know as Steve Hill is nothing but a charlatan. Haring around tracks in automatic cars and steering Chester City to relegation are

his only noteworthy gaming achievements. Stick a first-person shooter, an RPG or – god forbid – an online game in front of him and he'll sniff around its periphery like a dog inspecting its own vomit. He's not alone in his disdain for games such as *EverQuest* either – like many of us in the ZONE offices, he is put off by the drunken sales patter of our editor. After listening to Chris dronc on... and on, any staunch *EverQuester* would soon lose their taste for the game. I personally have never played the game and thanks to Chris, neither am I ever likely to.

So we thought it would be fun to tempt Steve into playing through his worst nightmare. Of course, it wasn't easy, but if you know Steve, getting him to play anything other than *Championship Manager* is difficult. The question is, did he like it? You can probably guess that he didn't and, because we like watching him suffer, we thought we'd make him do it all again next month. Whoever said this job was easy was dead wrong.

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And the results are predictably amusing

ONLINE REVIEW'S POLICY

When it comes to mods and total conversions (TCs) for games such as *Half-Life*, they are often released in beta form (ie unfinished) and are generally being updated constantly. When we review them we will always try to take into consideration that they are often worked on by teams working just for the love of it and released free for our enjoyment. Even so, there is a lot of pap out there and downloading such things can often be a waste of good surfing time.

Similarly with retail online games, such as *EverQuest*, code is always being updated and although we can't provide regular updates we will try to review major ones as and when they occur.

NEWS



No laughter. No rum. No nothing in fact. What's going on?

SOFTWARE PIRACY

Gameplay to start making games

Not content with selling games and running the online games portal formerly known as Wireplay, Gameplay has decided to make the bold move into games development. And we're not talking about another poker game either. With a view to taking on the likes of *EverQuest* and *Ultima Online*, Gameplay will be releasing a massively-multiplayer persistent world offering of its own called *Online Pirate*.

Of course, Gameplay isn't the only company responsible. Coded by German outfit NeoSoftware, Gameplay seems to have liked the game so much it bought into the company. NeoSoftware's last game, *Alien Nations*, although fairly big at home, was a flop elsewhere so Gameplay must have seen some pretty impressive code. In terms of its planned features, *Online Pirate* is already impressive: not only can you develop your player character (choosing 18th-century professions such as explorer, trader, soldier or pirate), but you can eventually own your own ship, from schooners to galleons, and even run an entire fleet. As your ship takes damage, repairs must be made and ships upgraded. As yet we don't know if there will be an aspect where you roam around shipless, but we shall be talking to the developers over the coming weeks and letting you know what you can expect. You can find out more on *Online Pirate* by visiting www.neo.at/index-e.html

ULTIMA ONLINE CONVENTION

You probably already knew that *Star Trek* conventions were bad news, but now it seems goblin fanciers the world over are gearing up for the first *Ultima Online* Player Convention, in Austin, Texas, in November.

Origin, developer of both the game and next year's sequel, will be hosting a number of seminars and workshops on such diverse and mind-numbingly dull subjects as *UO* politics, treasure hunting and even fishing. Mind you, we shouldn't scoff. Given half a chance, we're sure our esteemed editor would rather be there than here. In fact,

we suspect he has already booked a flight. See www.uo.com for more details.



A room full of *UO* converts? The horror.



ATRIARCH

A brand new organic, persistent universe awaits...

Among the aggressive claims of other developers the attitude and approach of the World Fusion team is a breath of fresh air. They are creating *Atriarch* as a 'fun' place to game and even at this alpha stage of development they are not shy about letting people know how they intend to do this.

Unlike most other games, *Atriarch* will run as a single organic world – there are no different servers, everybody exists on the same zoneless planet, all 652,000 square miles of it. Additionally, each and every NPC and player is truly persistent – even if you log off your character does not. The implications of this are many: not only does it mean that if you kill an NPC they are truly dead and gone, but to a certain extent the same applies to you.

However, *Atriarch* is not advocating 'perma-death'. In its totally organic system each species will be capable of asexual reproduction to create one or more spawn. Your character's spawn will be born in one of

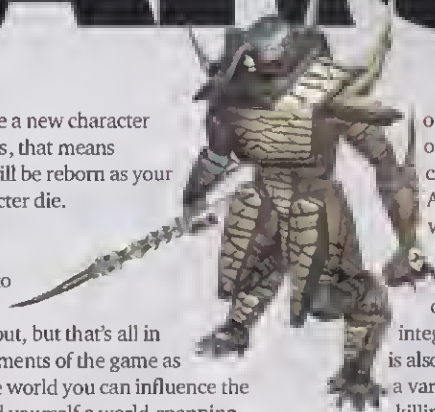
two forms. It will either be a new character coming into the game (yes, that means another player), or you will be reborn as your spawn should your character die.

GREEN REVOLUTION

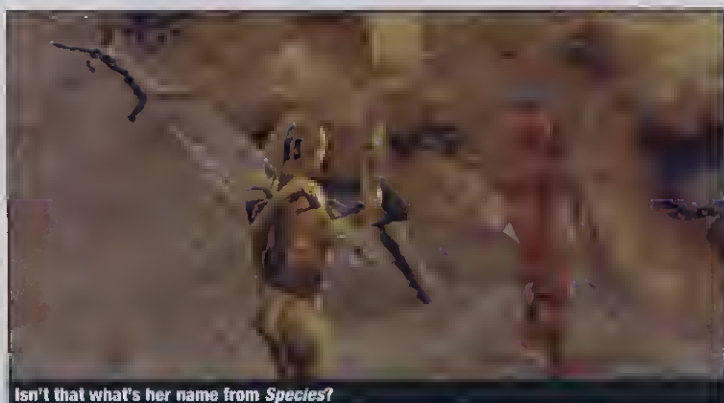
This will require players to think a little more about where and how they log out, but that's all in line with the strategic elements of the game as a whole. Within the game world you can influence the 'natives' (NPCs) and build yourself a world-spanning empire – at least in theory as other players will be attempting to create their own city-states to develop, or to steal yours. Development and evolution play major roles and your towns develop on a level system while your characters do not. You can also breed new forms of organic species to use for either offence or defence. Strategies involve both your army deployments and orders and how you interact with

other gamers as well as whether or not you intend to kill others, capture them, or maim them. Almost anything can be used as a weapon and you can make new ones as well as breed different organic structures to act as armour or other forms of defences. PvP is an integral part of the game, although, it is also approached differently: there are a variety of penalties associated with killing others, ranging from harsh ones for killing newbies to none if you're avenging a family member or taking part in a declared war campaign.

All in all, *Atriarch* is a breath of fresh air amid all the EQ clones currently under development. It is an ambitious title that may or may not work out, but whatever happens, at least the development team is willing to do something different – that alone makes it stand out from the pack. www.atriarch.com



Believe it or not, that's an embassy building.



Isn't that what's her name from *Species*?



Daylight in the misty Cavolon swamp is very atmospheric.

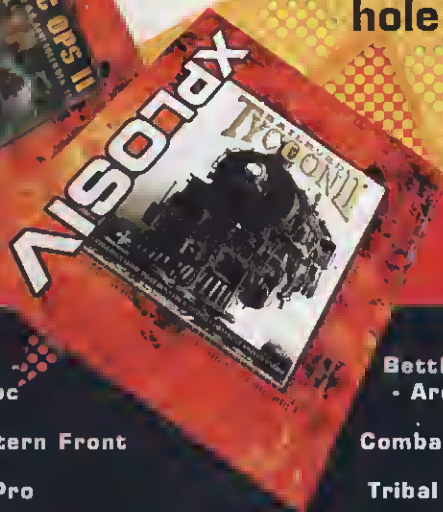


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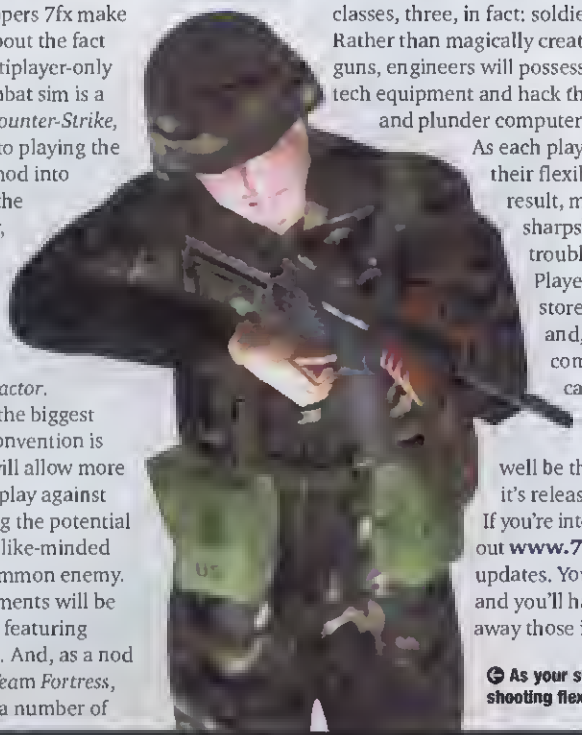
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TEAM FACTOR

It doesn't score any points in originality, but *TF* will have you hooked

Czech developers 7fx make no bones about the fact that its multiplayer-only tactical combat sim is a blatant rip-off of *Counter-Strike*, and readily admit to playing the popular *Half-Life* mod into the early hours of the morning. However, with a new 3D engine and a handful of new ideas, they are hoping to go one better with *Team Factor*.

Perhaps one of the biggest departures from convention is that *Team Factor* will allow more than two teams to play against each other, creating the potential for factions to join like-minded teams against a common enemy. The other new elements will be real-world locales, featuring famous landmarks. And, as a nod to games such as *Team Fortress*, there will even be a number of



classes, three, in fact: soldier, engineer and driver. Rather than magically creating implausible sentry guns, engineers will possess the ability to use high-tech equipment and hack through security doors and plunder computer files.

As each player increases their skills, their flexibility will suffer as a result, meaning highly-trained sharpshooters will have trouble driving some vehicles. Player statistics will be stored on a central database and, with real-time voice commands and linked campaign scenarios also thrown into the mix, *Team Factor* could well be the next big thing when it's released next Christmas.

If you're interested, then check out www.7fx.com for regular updates. You won't be disappointed and you'll have something to chase away those insomnia blues.

⚡ As your skills increase, your shooting flexibility suffers.



The transport situation can't exactly be described as high-tech.



All types of all-terrain vehicles are available, however basic.



In the future, all driving games will be played online.

CODEMASTERS GO MULTIPLAYER MAD

Since buying into the US games market UK publisher Codemasters seems to have taken a shine to online gaming. Already it is actively behind the old online RPG *The Realm* and to tie-in with the release of its online-friendly off-road racer *Insane*, the company will soon be setting up the Codemasters Multiplayer Network. This new division will service all future Codemasters releases that support online play, including *Colin McRae Rally 2* and *World Championship Snooker*.

NO LIGHT FOR DARK ZION

Typical. Just as we were about to tell you all about a promising online role-player by the name of *Dark Zion*, the developers go and can the project due to a financial lack of interest from publishers. Announced in April, development on *Dark Zion* commenced in 1998. On the payroll was sci-fi author Tad Williams and *Ultima Online: Second Age* lead programmer Jason Spangler. For the insatiably curious, you can go to www.darkzion.com to see what the game would have been all about.



NEVERWINTER NIGHTS

On these mild summer evenings, thoughts are already turning to the dreary forthcoming winter nights. **Jed Norton** looks into his crystal ball and forecasts what's ahead, multiplayer wise, in next season's RPG from the creators of *Baldur's Gate*

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Bioware
PUBLISHER Interplay
WEBSITE www.neverwinternights.com
OUT Summer 2001

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Third-edition AD&D ruleset
- ★ Modular multiplayer game (similar to *Vampire's*), but on a much larger scale
- ★ Uses the MDK2 graphics engine
- ★ It's not just online either

Now dwarves and elves may not be your thing – even if you secretly get turned on by luscious fantasy-esque girlies wearing unfeasibly skimpy armour... but that's not the point. The point is that some games show huge potential, a bit like some of those girlies I mentioned, and *Neverwinter Nights* is one of those games.

Neverwinter Nights is based around third-edition AD&D rules – exactly what that means is a bit irrelevant – if you played *Baldur's Gate*, then you know what the second edition was like – and this is an update to those. Having banished funny-sided dice from the AD&D table-top gaming with *Baldur's Gate*, Bioware is doing the same for the next generation via *NWN* – and adding a hell of a lot of knobs, bells and whistles.

Firstly, there are drop-dead gorgeous graphics – that's right, not just nice but gorgeous. Environmental shading, shadows, lighting, real 3D objects – lots of techie names that mean nothing, except that you go "Wow! Cool!" when you see them (or "Awesome!" if you're the excitable type). Powering the whole shebang is Bioware's Omen engine, successfully road-tested in the recent MDK2.

Neverwinter Nights is bringing with it not just a single-player game (which we'll look at in a future issue) and an online storyline, but the ability for you to create your own stories,

which is extremely cool. We aren't talking simple dungeon romps either – you could create hundreds of Modules (levels) and link them all into one huge world via portals. Alternatively, you can jump into other people's Modules, pre-prepared Bioware games or have a player vs player fight in a simple arena. Modules range from 25 acres downwards and there is no theoretical limit as to how many modules you can string together; you could even run it from a dedicated server to mimic a persistent world.

The bonus is that you aren't reliant on game servers – though there will be some – you can host a game directly off your own PC. Now this sort of peer-to-peer hosting has not been a big hit in the past, however, Bioware is building in a lot more controls than others have done. If one gamer is hitting major lag, the others won't notice it – so long as the "host" PC is fine. If you crash out, you can re-log and join straight back in where you

for modules to play (if you don't have any mates who like wearing tights and pointy ears) as well as tournaments and semi-persistent worlds.

ENTERING THE ROLE VAULT

What about characters – where are they stored and how can you hack them? Well, there are three options here: You can store your characters locally on your own machine where you can do what you like to them,

“*Neverwinter Nights* is bringing with it not just a single-player game and an online storyline, but the ability to create your own stories, which is extremely cool”

left. If the host times out, the game has auto (or manual) save features so you can restart quickly.

Find a mate with a cable modem and 63 others can jump onto his system. If, however, you only have a 56K modem, then eight is your limit. Is the host always in charge? Far from it – anybody else can write and run the games. *NWN* will also provide a central matching service for gamers looking

you can store your characters on the DM or Hosts PC (so he can adjust them to suit the game), or you can store them in the Character Vault.

“We felt that there was a need for a central, standardised definition of fair character advancement,” says Rob Bartel, lead designer on *Neverwinter Nights*. “If you want to take part in a tournament or travel a wide variety of modules, you can store your character



Bad guys vs good guys with the DM giving them all a golden shower.

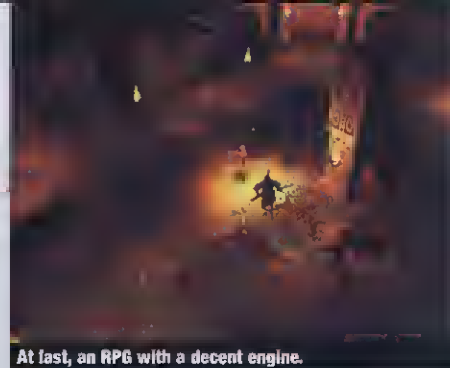


This shows the usage of variable heights in the game.

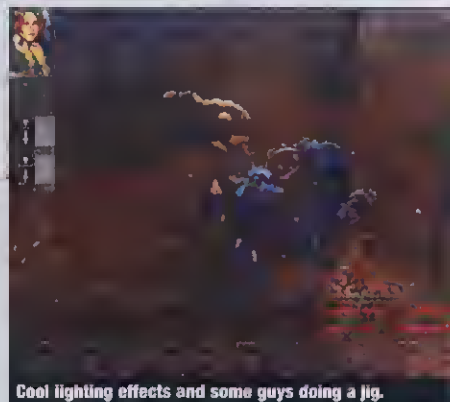




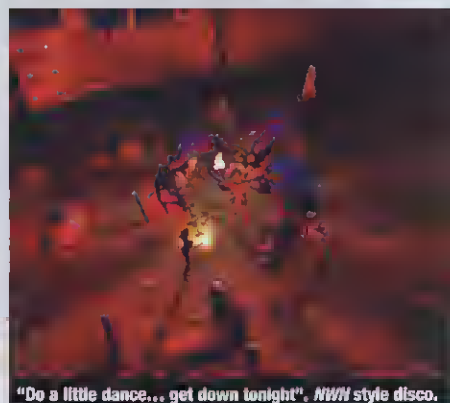
Sellafield-Man takes on 'Them'.



At last, an RPG with a decent engine.



Cool lighting effects and some guys doing a jig.



"Do a little dance... get down tonight". NWN style disco.

in the Character Vault. The Vault acts like a library: you check your character out when you want to play and check it back in when you're done. It will be passed through a series of filters to ensure that your character hasn't advanced an unfair amount, acquired an unfair amount of treasure, or been unduly modified. If your character fails any of these filters, you have the option of either altering your character to conform to Vault standards or saving it as a Local Character, thereby foregoing your Vault status."

Make sense? Sort of - we'll have to see how this one pans out long term, but the idea appears sound at least.

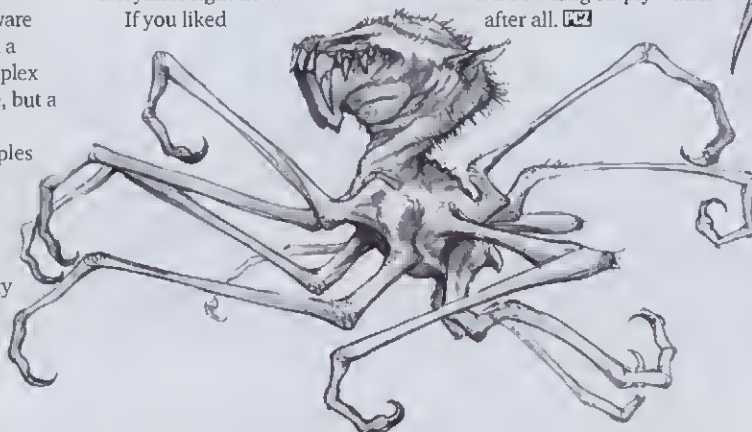
Now none of the above will be possible without an editor for creating your own stories. Bioware is designing what it likes to call a "granny proof" toolset. No complex 3D polygon alignment garbage, but a simple-to-use set of tools with tutorials, guidelines and examples all in the same box alongside the full game. Unless Carol Vorderman is their granny, we should all be able to use it.

So far, so good, there's plenty of extensibility and it can be played on lowly 56K modems,

what about PCs? Bioware has not released a minimum spec as yet, but they're going to allow as much customisation as possible, so that low-spec systems can still play the game. It's a nice idea, but when you realise that the number of characters, NPCs and objects are handled by available RAM don't expect much out of a PC with 16Mb.

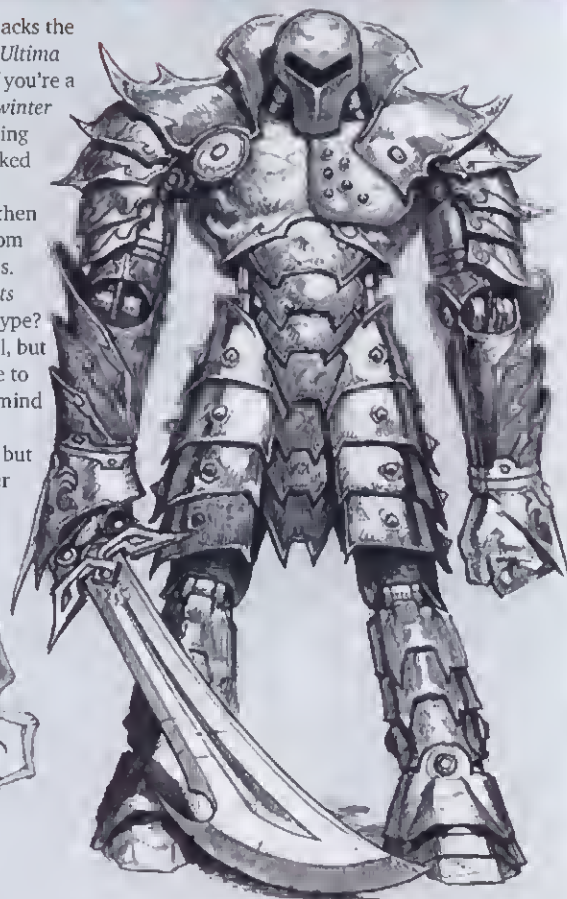
As for the rules of the game and the style of gameplay, simply look at *BG* or grab a copy of the AD&D third-edition rules. As all the rules are followed, you will know what to expect from the game in terms of characters, the 200-odd spells and how it all gels together. In theory you could start writing your own storylines right now.

If you liked



Baldur's Gate, if *EverQuest* lacks the RPG element you desire, if *Ultima Online* looks too dated or if you're a real AD&D nut, then *Neverwinter Nights* will have you salivating already. And if you get freaked out by people saying "Hail Stranger! Nice cod-piece", then you still might get a kick from the arenas and tournaments.

So will *Neverwinter Nights* live up to its already huge hype? It certainly has the potential, but it wouldn't be the first game to fall short of expectations - mind you, Bioware and Black Isle have a proven track record, but we won't get the real answer until well into next year. It'll be a long empty winter after all. **PCZ**



THE MOD SQUAD

THE OPERA FOR HALF-LIFE



Ross Mansfield loves *The Opera*, apparently.

With first-person shooters, you've got the arcade frag-happy games such as *Quake III* on the one hand, and ultra-realistic plod-a-thons such as *Counter-Strike* on the other. Slap bang in the middle comes *The Opera*, which, in the words of mapper Ross Mansfield, is about "movie realism", where ultra-violence meets art and *Street Fighter* beatings combine with John Woo-inspired gunfights. It's not about what you kill, but how you kill that matters. What's that all about then?

PCZ *The Opera* sounds like a cross between *Action Half-Life* and *Rocket Arena*...

RM It is very similar to *AHL* in some ways. A lot of people have said to me they grew up with *Action Quake* and so were interested in *The Opera* purely for the style element, but I'm not sure where *Rocket Arena* comes in. I would describe it as a one-on-one Hong-Kong-style fest.

PCZ How long have you been working on the mod and how many people are in the team?

RM The mod has been in production for around two years – I have been working on it for a little over a year. I work as one of the mappers and I've produced two complete maps for the first beta: a dark, underground parking garage for one-on-one play and a large nightclub/hotel/city map for any type of play. As it's not a professional team and we all do this in our spare time, our roles cross over quite a lot. The lead mapper manages most of the testing and the general detail stuff that has to be done. Texture artists do skins as well and we have a very talented and dedicated coder who works wonders on all the behind-the-scenes stuff including an in-game MP3 player. We currently have about 11 members.

PCZ With so many moves in the game won't it be difficult to get to grips with?

RM Possibly, but once you get used to it, the controls are intuitive. You could maybe compare it to a beat 'em up that has many different button combinations. At first you are swamped, but after a while you gain far more control. Also, with the Action Meter, you have to use your head – you can't just run around doing these moves all the time.

PCZ You have 50 words to sell the game to us...

RM If you've ever watched a cool film like *The Matrix*, or anything by John Woo, and been impressed by intense fight scenes and fast dramatic shoot outs, that's the sort of thing you can expect in this mod. We are going for movie realism here and... (sorry, time out – Ed).

PCZ What other mods are you impressed by?

RM I have looked at all the *Counter-Strike* maps for research and I was pretty impressed.

The first public beta of *The Opera* mod for *Half-Life* should be available now. Check out www.half-life.net/opera

SWAT 3 ELITE EDITION

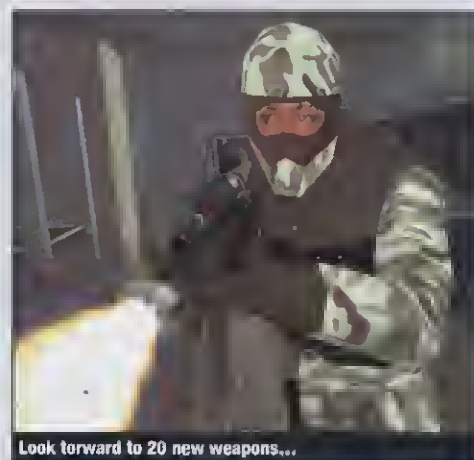
Multiplayer madness, at last

With our insatiable appetite still hungering for yet more real-world action, Sierra is poised to release *SWAT 3: Close Quarters Battle – Elite Edition*. You may remember that the original game had no multiplayer options and, with both *Counter-Strike* and *Rogue Spear* still extremely popular online, Sierra saw fit to upgrade its single-player classic to include some new online options.

Originally the multiplayer component was to be released as a mid-price expansion pack, but then we were told it would be included as a part of a special edition game including the original. Thankfully, those who already own the game will be able to download all the new *Elite Edition* components – including map and scenario editors – at no extra cost.

Game modes will include regular deathmatch, co-op game, teamplay, fast man standing, hostage rescue and others. AI-controlled hostages and civilians will react in a more convincing and independent manner than in the previous game – running from terrorists, for example. There will be more than 20 new weapons to add to *SWAT 3*'s already impressive arsenal, with a number of new weapon configurations for each. New sounds for each weapon have also been recorded and players will be able to configure the look of their characters by choosing from a number of body types, helmets and camo-skins.

SWAT 3 Elite Edition and the multiplayer files are due for release in October. Check www.sierrastudios.com/games/swat3 for all the latest info.



Look forward to 20 new weapons...



...and customisable characters.

RUBIES OF EVENTIDE

Great name, what about the game?

As if we didn't have enough online RPGs to replace our real lives with, Cyber Warrior Inc has announced that it will be releasing its own offering to the genre, *Rubies Of Eventide*, at the end of the year.

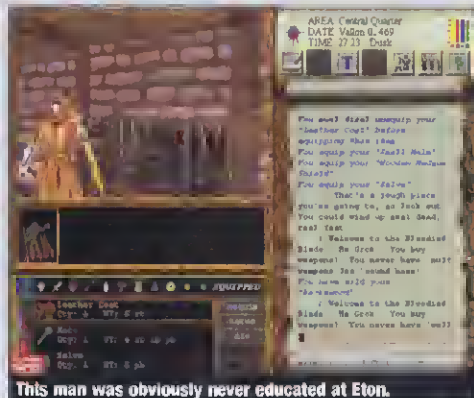
This first-person RPG will allow you to choose from a wide selection of races, up to 16 professions and from more than 30 trades and skills. For those of you inclined towards wizardry, there'll be around 200 spells for you to master and the gaming world will be filled with more

than 3,000 items. Parties will be made up of six players and you'll have to decide with your team mates whether you want to fight on the side of good or evil. Combat will be handled in real time, but don't worry too much if you die as you'll be duly resurrected, with the inevitable penalty, of course.

Currently in its beta stage, *Rubies Of Eventide* is available free until its release date by registering at www.rubiesofeventide.com



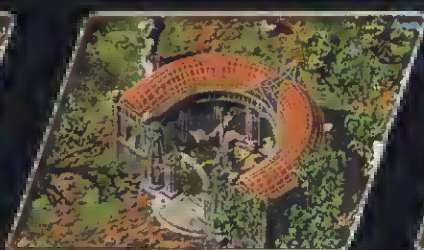
Don't forget girls and boys, never play with fire.



This man was obviously never educated at Eton.



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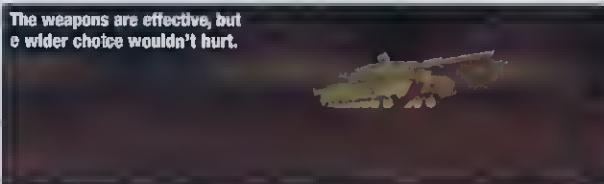


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www.bluebyte.net

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REVIEWS



The weapons are effective, but a wider choice wouldn't hurt.



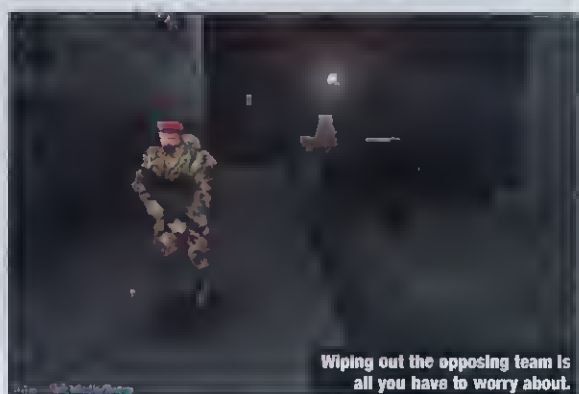
The pace of the game is impressive.



With its heady mix of action and atmosphere, SF will keep you rivetted.



The characters and locations are well-drawn, detailed and inventive.



Wiping out the opposing team is all you have to worry about.

STRIKE FORCE BETA V1.27

★ Out now • Free download from www.planetunreal.com/strikeforce/ (100Mb) Full version of *Unreal Tournament* required

With *Unreal Tournament* now muscling in on *Counter-Strike* territory, Tony Lamb looks at one of the copycat mods available

Only a few months ago, Epic Games' *Unreal Tournament* justifiably won the PC ZONE Best First-Person Shooter 2000 Reader Award. With its heady blend of action and atmosphere, you voted it above such giants as *Quake III Arena* and *Half-Life*, relegating the other also rans to the multiplayer scrap heap. It is quite simply a fantastic deathmatch environment.

At 100Mb in total, *Strike Force* is a hefty download in anybody's book. Targeted fair and square at the legions of fans dedicated to *Half-Life* mod *Counter-Strike*, the aim of *Strike Force* is to allow UT regulars to get a taste of the real-life weaponry and SAS-style

skulking about that has made *Counter-Strike* so popular. It's a team-based terrorist/counter-terrorist battle, and although the literature doesn't make any direct reference to *CS*, the inspiration is obvious.

“The missions seemed to consist of little more than killing the opposing team but that was an intensely rewarding and enjoyable experience in itself”

The huge download might put some 56K modem users off and there were some interruptions and installation headaches at first. It's important to make sure you have the latest version of both *Strike Force* and *Unreal Tournament*.

You'll find SF beta 1.26 on the September 2000 PCZ cover disc and version 1.30 is due for release any day now. The screenshots from 1.30 look impressive indeed – check them out on the Website.

Having fought past the initial gremlins, the game became great fun. True, it's hampered by the unfinished nature of its 'manual' and a bit of guesswork is needed to know what to do, but the pace

of the action will soon make you forget this. The missions seemed to consist of little more than killing the opposing team, but that was a thoroughly rewarding and enjoyable experience in itself.

Weapons include the almost

obligatory Desert Eagle pistol, AK-47 Assault Rifle and Heckler & Koch MP5 submachine gun among others. They're all suitably effective, but a wider choice would be nice. Cowardly sniper types will love the legendary Barrett M82A1 for its extreme range, accuracy and stopping power. Although, the sniper scope is an all-or-nothing affair that is just too powerful and nowhere near as flexible as its *Unreal Tournament* equivalent.

Graphically, *Strike Force* is very pretty. The characters are well-drawn, the locations inventive and well-detailed, and there are some nice touches thrown in. The user-friendly *Unreal* engine isn't as CPU-hungry as most others, such as *Quake III*, so the game works well on lower-spec machines. In-game sounds are realistic but sometimes lose track with the action, which can be confusing.

Hopefully, it's a glitch that will be addressed in future releases.

A great deal of effort is going into *Strike Force* and, although it is currently limited in some areas, beta 1.30 promises to add more spice. *Unreal Tournament* mods are quite thick on the ground, but this is one of the few that stands head and shoulders above the crowd. **PCZ**

PCZVERDICT

ⓘ **UPPERS** That wonderful *Unreal* engine • Map variety • Proven formula

ⓘ **DOWNERS** Initial installation problems • Weak manual • Been there before

75 Roll on beta 1.30!



TACTICAL OPS BETA 1.20

★ 44Mb download from www.planetunreal.com/tacticalops/

Tony Lamb sets his sights on the latest attempt to bring *Half-Life* to the *UT* platform

Leaping into the fray with all guns blazing, *Tactical Ops* modestly bills itself as "The ultimate counter-terrorist mod for *Unreal Tournament*" and is another attempt to bring *Half-Life* variant *Counter-Strike* to the *UT* platform.

At a manageable 44Mb, *Tactical Ops* is a mod that will neither ruin your phone bill nor tempt the gods of download-interruption into action. Installation is a breeze as the game slots itself neatly onto the standard *UT* interface and presents its own options screen as a bonus. *Tactical Ops* doesn't play with your *UT* start-up like *Strike Force* and hence doesn't mess it up either. What a relief.

With this easy installation completed, it was a pleasure to see that although servers are thin on the ground, the game connected almost every time with a minimum of fuss. Skins were downloaded when needed and the fun began...

The immediate impression on starting *Tactical Ops* was very favourable. The screen is well laid out with information clearly visible. Selecting the optional widescreen view was weird at first (unless you have a wildly expensive telly or very big monitor) but quite easy to use in practice.

The weapons are the predictable armoury of Desert Eagle, AK47, M4A1, MP5 and

**PCZONE
AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE**

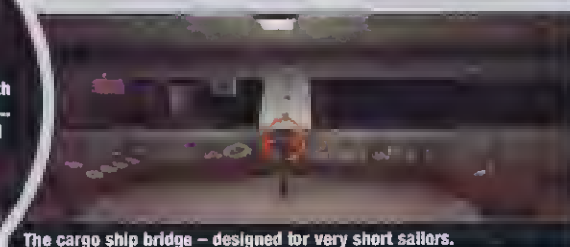
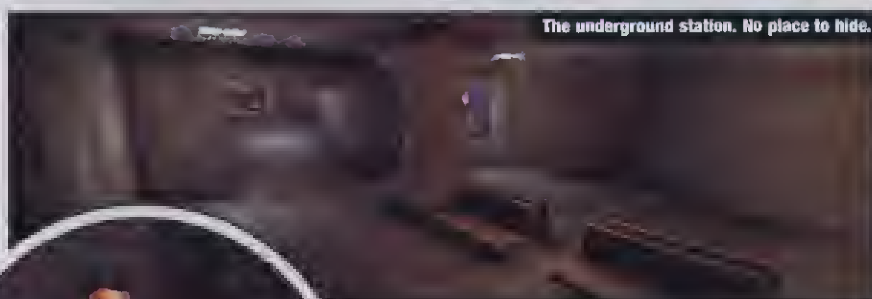
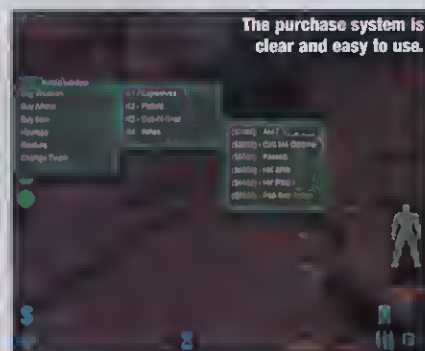
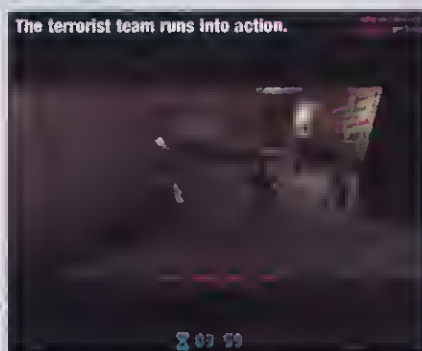
Mossberg Shotgun, but there is also a full complement of other goodies including grenades, flashbangs, body armour and more. All are available to both teams too, which is nice when you favour a particular type of firepower to do your dirty work.

The maps are well thought out, fun, and designed to keep both teams on their toes. They're sometimes a bit on the small side but at least this means you're never far away from plenty of close-quarter action. It's a shame there isn't a greater variety of maps but that will improve over time and with the die already cast in terms of game quality, designers will have a high standard to follow.

Sound effects are also of the highest order with distinctive weapon blasts and wincingly realistic (and frequent) bullet impacts. It's unnerving when the hostages huddling miserably in the corners can be heard bemoaning their poor luck and dubious fate.

Everything in this beta indicates a classic mod is in the offing. *Tactical Ops* is clearly more advanced than *Strike Force* and its user-friendliness is head and shoulders above its rival. Where *Strike Force* has more maps and textures, the developers behind *Tactical Ops* have concentrated on the quality of the gameplay to make it far more approachable. Big maps can come later when all the *Strike Force* players have defected!

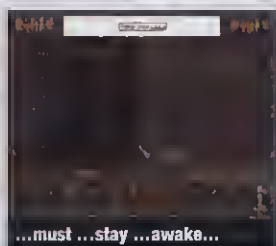
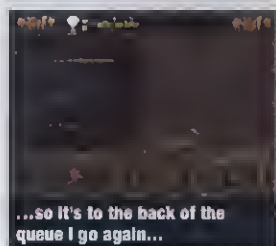
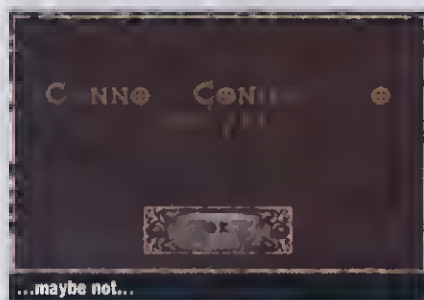
Counter-Strike for *Unreal Tournament*? Very nearly. **P22**



PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Easy installation and configuration • Good maps
• Convincing atmosphere • Fun
DOWNERS Needs more servers
• Been there before

80 Coming along nicely chaps



DIABLO II V1.03

★ £34.99 with free online play via www.battle.net • Sierra • Out now

Selling more than a million copies already, *Diablo II* is hot. So why, asks **Jed Norton**, are there only three servers that can't seem to cope with those gamers?

Two years to make a game that only runs at 640x480 resolution and requires a microscope to see any difference from the original. Two years to build a chat/game interface that is worse than the original and two years to dream up the brilliant idea of having the patch server on the same box as the game server... duh!

Diablo II was supposed to be about playing the game in its entirety with your mates (or enemies) and, until Blizzard sorts out its servers, this is simply too much of a chore. But what really sucks is if, and when, you do get into a game, *Diablo II* really isn't that bad. After the wait, though, all you get is a numb ass, a full bladder and your ashtray looks like Mt Etna – six hours go by, it's

“At the moment it's not worth buying to play online... you'll only end up frustrated”

Beneath the surface *Diablo II* is a much-enhanced game – the addition of server-based characters, increasing the maximum number of players per game, expanding the playing area, adding the 'hardcore' game (albeit a blatant rip from the 'ironman' game created by gamers for the original *Diablo*)

3am and you're thinking about skiving off work.

The point is that at the moment it's not worth buying *Diablo II* to play online. If you do you'll only end up frustrated and bitter (as I did) and you'll never play it again. Best thing you can do is wait until Blizzard sort their servers out. There are better

and lots more. Also, let's not miss the fact that the game now reacts to increasing numbers within a game, more players more baddies – simple but a nice touch – the ability to form a proper gaming party and, of course, the player 'stash' in which to store goodies for trade.

As far as gameplay is concerned, it's the pure hack 'n' slash dungeon-romp that we all know and loved. As an RPG *Diablo II* is less impressive, the AI is even more simplistic than its predecessor, with baddies resorting to overwhelming you in large numbers. But, we have to face facts, this isn't a cerebral game – it never was.

WORTH THE WAIT?

As a 'pure' RPG *Diablo II* can't quite hack it. As an action RPG however, it fares much better. But as a multiplayer game, *Diablo II* borders on tarcical. Why? Because the servers that are available simply can't cope with the demand. Sure I can play 'open games', where I use my single-player character, but I've been doing that for years – in a game called *Diablo*.

things to do than sit staring at your monitor until 4am.

Other frustrations such as latency, not being able to create games, not seeing games (the list goes on and on) can all be traced back to the servers again! Though it quashed a few minor bugs, the recent patch added a countdown to game creation – so now you can sit for 20 minutes watching a counter go from 999 to 0 and then get a server error. What's the point? **PCZ**

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Classic non-cerebral *Diablo* slash-fest • Millions of other frustrated gamers • Much-enhanced group play and options • Hack-proof characters
- DOWNERS Millions of other frustrated gamers • Only room for 150,000 on the servers • Problems getting into a game or creating a game • Server lag

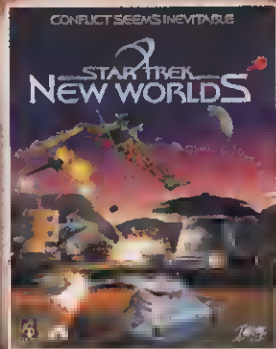
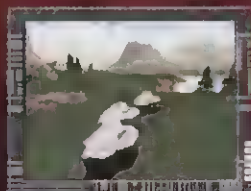
50 With servers working 60 per cent, but even then it's not really worth the effort

CONFLICT SEEMS INEVITABLE

"Star Trek meets StarCraft"

PC Gamer

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COUNTER-STRIKE BETA 7

★ Free download from www.counter-strike.net • Available now

When Beta 7 first went up **Mark Hill** was the first to download it



It says something about the future of the gaming industry when the game we spend most of our time playing is completely free. Especially when you consider that this is basically a buyer's guide magazine. *Counter-Strike* is a worldwide phenomenon that has revolutionised the world of modifications and online gaming. Almost every office in the world grinds to a halt at lunchtime as people plant bombs, rescue hostages and generally forget reality for an hour. With *Beta 7*, *CS* has taken another evolutionary step towards perfection. Some purists complain every time a new version comes out, usually claiming something really stupid, such as "they've ruined it now". Of course, when you spend so much time getting to know

something, any small change is likely to be greeted with equal measures of enthusiasm and childish derision. But the key to *CS*'s success lies precisely in this constant improvement, this constant change. This version may introduce some new features and new maps, but the game underneath is basically the same one. The atmosphere is just as tense, killing is just as thrilling and dying is just as frustrating. The first changes you're likely to start messing about with are the new weapon (the dual Berettas) and the new counter-terrorist skin (Seal Team 6). The dual pistols can only be bought by terrorists and work an absolute treat. The only problem with them is that you can easily get carried away,

remembering what each one looks like, you'll be pleased with the new interface. Rather than presenting skins and weapons in a list, clicking on each one brings up a picture and, in the case of guns, details of their specifications. It can be rather confusing when you just want to get on with things, but overall it's a welcome addition. The knife model has changed and a secondary attack has been added, although you probably won't use it much now that the VIP has been given a pistol. What you will notice are the new animations, particularly the death ones. You can now see players clutching their feet in pain and being thrown backwards by the force of the shots. Again, it's an

"You can now see players clutching their feet in pain and being thrown backwards"

forgetting this is a realistic team combat game rather than a John Woo film, the result being a score of dead team mates and a popularity of minus zero. The new skin is merely aesthetic, but it's so detailed you begin to wish all the CTs would use it instead of the ugly 'flyhead' SAS skin. If you usually have trouble

aesthetic change, but it does make killing enemies all the more satisfying. The rest of the changes are less obvious, and deal with bugs and modifications to existing maps. This can come as a shock the first time you play them. We spent two minutes running frantically round Aztec bellowing: "Where's the bloody bomb site gone?" In a way, it makes something too familiar slightly more challenging, although many of you will probably spit in rage at some of the alterations. The new maps are, for the most part, very good, especially Vegas and Arab Street. They really make you appreciate the work that goes into textures, something sorely missing from maps created by fans. If you're a *CS* fan you'll naturally know all this already. If you haven't tried it yet, we can think of no better reason to get online. **CS**

TEST DRIVE

If there's one thing that's bothered us in the past, it's seeing all those vehicles scattered around and not being able to drive them. With this latest version you actually can. It's still in the very early stages and you can only do it on one very raw map featuring two jeeps. But while the physics are all wrong and driving the jeeps is uncomfortable, you can already see the possibilities for future versions. You can drive over ramps and into a lake and shoot from the passenger seat while someone else drives. We will wait patiently for a fully working map.



The map is unplayable – for the moment.



A shoot-out in Arab Streets. Nice rugs.



The Vegas map is colourful and extremely well-designed.



The new Seal model, in front of a fetishist machine of dubious taste.

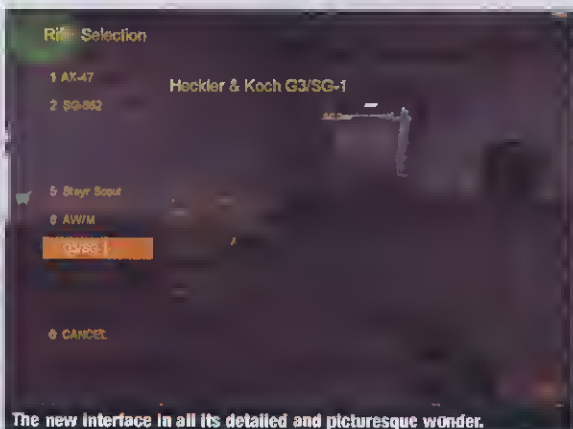
PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Excellent new maps

- Dual berettas are cool
- Useful new interface
- Good death animations

DOWNERS Some problems with lag

93 The beta just got better



The new interface in all its detailed and picturesque wonder.

excessive
force



WingMan Force 3D



WingMan RumblePad™



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It's the closest thing to reality. WingMan Force 3D.
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Logitech

ONLINE SECURITY

PART 1: PORT SCANNERS

SOFTWARE
ROUND UP

When you connect to the Internet, your PC automatically opens the door to any number of malicious users. *Phil Wand* looks at tools that can tell if you're not surfing alone

These days, cranking up your dial-up means so much more than a bloated phone bill. It means that you're about to connect to the largest and most inhospitable network on the planet, where you'll exchange countless bits and bytes with remote machines and faceless users from all around the globe.

It's kind of safe though, isn't it? Well, no, not entirely. Data packets are constantly travelling to and from your machine at multiple entry and exit locations, known as ports. You talk Web with Web servers on port 80, mail with POP3 and SMTP servers on ports 110 and 25, FTP on 21, and so on. Corporates use software to restrict access to ports

that are against company policy, but your home PC will almost certainly have no such restrictions and will allow packets to arrive at and depart from any assignable port between 0 and 65,536. Ten years ago this would have been fine. Today, with so many hackers around, you'd be daft not to watch what's coming and going inside your machine.

REVIEWS

SECURITY PORT SCANNER AWSPS

AWSPS claims to be "the only known tool able to discover which programs are using ports on the PC", and certainly the results we obtained were spot on. Anyone can install this tool and instantly have a better understanding of what's going on when online.

Who: Atelier Web

Where: www.atelierweb.com

Pros: Supremely informative results

• Ports database • Well documented

Cons: Rather costly alongside rivals

Cost: US\$30 (about £18)

Score: ★★★★★

OUR
CHOICE

X-NETSTAT

X-Netstat scans your PC for active TCP/IP connections and can be configured to refresh automatically at preset intervals. It'll also show 'listening' ports, where your computer is ready to accept but has not established a data connection. Unlike main rival AWSPS, the main screen is clutter free and clearly labelled.

Who: Fresh Software

Where: www.arez.com/fs

Pros: Easy to use • Easy to understand

• Fast and unobtrusive

Cons: No online help • Incomprehensive scan results

Cost: US\$5 (about £3)

Score: ★★★★★

WINSCAN

WinScan works by sending data packets to every available port on a specified machine and then reporting back on which ones allow access. This process can be applied either to the local PC or to a whole range of remote TCP/IP network addresses.

Who: Sean Mathias

Where: www.prosolve.com

Pros: Online help • Useful for home LANs

Cons: Not for beginners • Incomprehensive scan results

Cost: Freeware

Score: ★★★★★

NETCOP SCANNER

Netcop Scanner works by testing successive ports in a user-defined range and reporting the ones that responded. The information that comes back is only really of use to people familiar with TCP/IP, so we really can't recommend it for home use.

Who: Netcop Software Inc

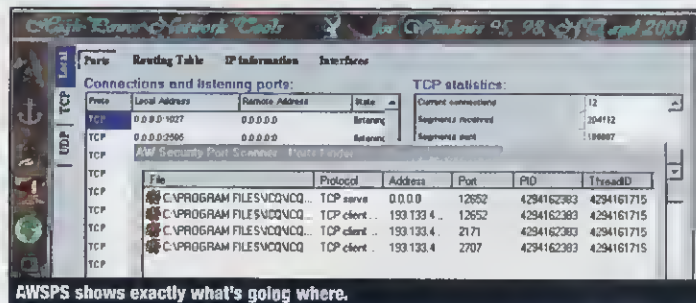
Where: www.netcop.com

Pros: Small, neat, fast • Does the job

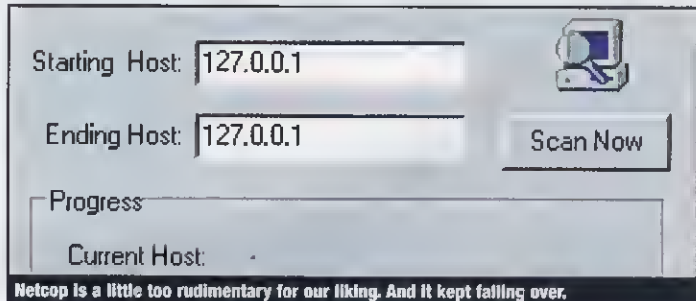
Cons: No online help • Not for beginners

Cost: Freeware

Score: ★★★★★



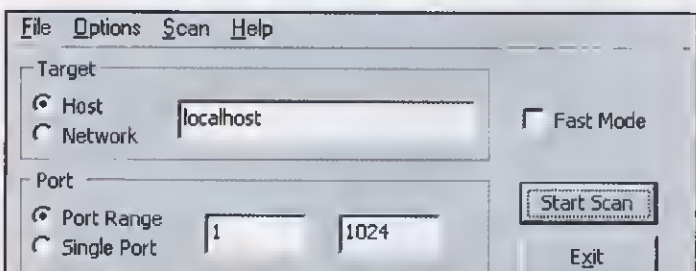
AWSPS shows exactly what's going where.



Netcop is a little too rudimentary for our liking. And it kept falling over.

#	Remote Addr	Local Port	Remote Port	Protocol	Status
0	208.184.216.230.napster.com	2595	80	TCP	CLOSING
1	m64-mp1-cvz2a.ren.nl.com	2651	1433	TCP	ESTABLISHED
2	modem-245.eleinion.dialup.pol.co.uk	12652	1152	TCP	ESTABLISHED
3	m64-mp1-cvz2a.ren.nl.com	12652	1048	TCP	ESTABLISHED
4	pc69-gu6.cable.nl.com	2171	8580	TCP	ESTABLISHED
5	cyclone.chellford.enformatica.com	139	2147	TCP	ESTABLISHED
6	dhcp25.chellford.enformatica.com	139	1029	TCP	ESTABLISHED
7	205.188.2.39	2707	5190	TCP	ESTABLISHED
8	swim.pipex.net	2234	21	TCP	CLOSING
9	filestore.chellford.enformatica.com	2747	139	TCP	ESTABLISHED
10	fileserver.chellford.enformatica.com	2748	139	TCP	ESTABLISHED
11	cyclone.chellford.enformatica.com	2749	139	TCP	ESTABLISHED

With a great interface fronting a great utility, X-Netstat is top quality for around £3.



WinScan raps on every door to see which ones open.

SO WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

It's actually rather unlikely that you're the target of malicious Netizens, as in statistical terms, your connection to the Internet is wholly insignificant (you represent one in around 200 million users, and one in four billion potential IP addresses). And remember, there are so many programs that use the Internet that today's PC is simply teeming with different – and innocuous – connections.

However, it is still possible that you're being hacked. If a port scan leads you to believe that you're not alone when on the Net, get yourself a reputable utility, such as Norton Anti-Virus or F-Secure Anti-Virus, the latest versions of which provide protection against better-known Trojans which permit remote access to your PC.

If you remain perturbed by the activity inside your machine when online, tear out. Next month we'll look at personal firewalls, and pick the best one to ensure that access to your PC is always under your control.

We move the information that moves your world.

adaptec

NEW

EASY CD CREATOR 4 DELUXE

MP3

MUSIC

INTERNET

*Your CD
is served!*

BACKUP

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a Mac use
Toast 4 Deluxe.**

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New Easy CD Creator™ 4 Deluxe goes way beyond the software that came with your CD-Recorder, and all earlier Deluxe editions, so you can take the fun even further. Now you can pull MP3 tracks and other music from the Internet, as well as from LPs and cassettes, to create your own custom CDs. And new Take Two™ software makes it easy to back up all your important



data and quickly recover from hard disk or system failures. Easy CD Creator 4 Deluxe also enables you to edit, enhance and share your photos and video. Do more with your music, data, photos, and video with Easy CD Creator 4 Deluxe. The box even includes a CD labeller, sample labels and a cable to connect your stereo to your computer.

<http://www.adaptec-europe.com>

Available from Action Computer Supplies, Dabs Direct, Insight, Micro Warehouse, PC World, Simply Computers, Software Warehouse or from your local computer software reseller.

STEVE HILL DOES... EVERQUEST

In a new series, *Steve Hill* goes online to get the real deal on online games and the people who play them

OK, here's the deal. Despite working on the periphery of this hateful industry for more years than I care to remember, I have never knowingly played a role-playing game, at least not of the traditional goblins, elves and dwarves variety. Like drinking bitter, going to rugby matches or watching *Emmerdale*, it's something I have never felt the slightest need to get involved with. In fact, I'd go as far as to say I find the whole idea of grown men parading around mythical lands and pretending to be wizards utterly risible. Fans of the genre that I have had contact with have done nothing to change my mind and, if anything, have strengthened my anti-RPG resolve. Thanks to Paul Mallinson, I am still unable to think of the name *Menzoberranzan* without cracking a grin, and I've been pinned into too many pub corners by Chris Anderson to ever have any interest in *Ultima*.

To be honest, if pressed, I'm not entirely sure I know what an RPG actually is. Clearly, there's a clue in the name, but there's barely enough time in the day to get on with your real life, let alone conduct a fictional one. Admittedly, this is utterly hypocritical, given that I can comfortably spend eight hours a day pretending to be a football manager, but that's different. Football is a real, tangible phenomenon that I have vast experience of and can therefore wholly relate to. Unlike chasing goblins, which, as the genre positioning would suggest, is the stuff of fantasy. Not a particular fantasy of mine, I hasten to add.

Moving on, I'm not a great evangelist of online games either and have never sat at home and played one. It's a well-worn argument but, to my mind, the fun of multi-player games is seeing distress on your opponent's face, something that can't be replaced by lag-ridden skirmishes with no-marks from Buttpoke, Ohio.

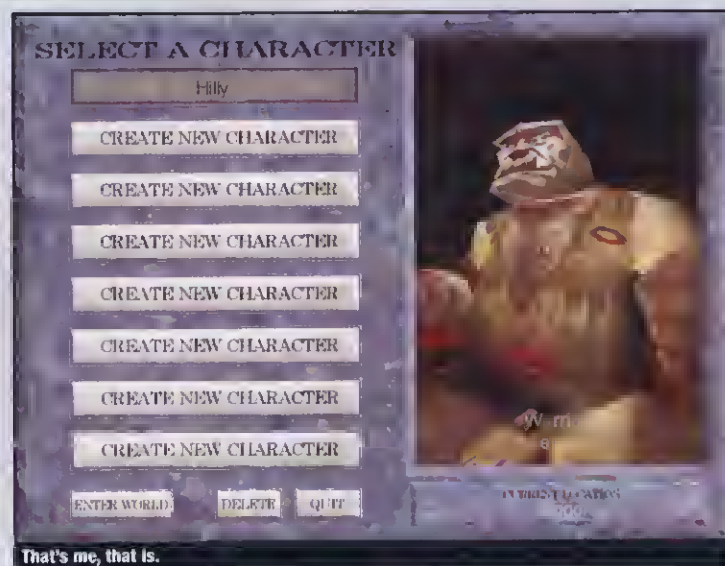


If you see this man in EQ - kill him.

So, who better to play the great unwashed's current online RPG of choice? Almost anyone you might think, but what began as a joke in the knockabout world of the *PC ZONE* office is about to become reality. Following weeks of negotiation, a fee has been agreed, and I, Sir Stephen of Hillshire, am about to enter the wonderful and frightening world of *EverQuest: The Ruins Of Kunark*. A shiny-boxed copy has been dispatched to my homestead, upon which a scantily-clad damsel gazes lustfully at an upright man-sized lizard sporting a codpiece fashioned from shrunken human skulls. Appalled by what I have seen, I am tempted to turn back, but the quest has been set. The lights are dimmed, the trousers are off and I'm going in. This is my story...

DAY ONE

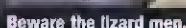
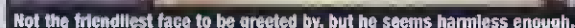
Faced with a 96-page manual, the in-game tutorial seemed an obvious place to start. A crudely realised landscape waited, where I was given instruction by a friendly dwarf known as, wait for it, Prumpy Ironroe. I kid you not. Preconceptions fully intact, he introduced me to a variety of his similarly outlandishly named friends, and between them they taught me the rudiments of movement, combat, trading and banking. All of which I promptly forgot while spending two-and-a-half hours downloading patches for the game. If my enthusiasm for this project was muted to begin with, then it reached rock bottom as progress bars inched along over a gruelling period of self-loathing. Having exhausted the more traditional areas of the Internet, I even attempted to kill time by entering an *EverQuest* newsgroup. Explaining my ensuing assignment, I made a simple request for advice to beginners, the only reply coming from somebody calling themselves Dark Tyger who keenly suggested, "Give me your job." Gladly. After a genuinely mind-numbing wait, the game finally declared itself happy and ready to play, unlike the red-eyed mug at the keyboard. The registration process, while not quite as time-consuming, was scarcely any more enjoyable, marred by constant crashes. Eventually, after what was now three hours of despair, it was finally time for the momentous first steps in a magical kingdom. At which point, the computer reset itself. It's the future of gaming, you know.




Several deep breaths, a mental visualisation of a pile of banknotes, and yet another attempt was made. The constant crashing was discovered to be caused by the screen grabber I was using (HyperSnap, grab fans), thus presenting a problem in visually documenting my escapade. Hopefully, I turned to the chat room for help, where an instant reply enlightened me as to the in-built grabber, the first good bit of news all night.

"We struck up a conversation that suggested she was either a complete retard or was actually attempting to talk in the style of an ogre. I wasn't prepared for this"

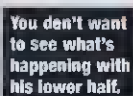
Selecting the highly-populated Mathaniel Marr server, the character creation screen was next, where I eschewed elves, dwarves and halflings in favour of an Ogre, something I have unfairly been described as. The random name generator predictably threw up Ogrox, Rhanak and Zuktuuk, all of which lost out to the far more charismatic Hilly. I was then asked to choose a deity and, in the absence of Antichrist, I opted for Agnostic.



After interminable *Blair Witch*-style wanderings, I eventually stumbled on the original starting point, wherein I chanced upon my first player character, a frankly ugly piece of work by the name of Purdie Kaboom. Taking a seat next to her, we struck up a conversation that suggested she was either a complete retard or was



actually attempting to talk in the style of an
 Ogre. Role-playing, I suppose you could call it.
 I wasn't prepared for this, and I certainly wasn't
 going to enter into it, preferring to keep my diction
 accurate and informal. Vaguely spurred by an
 Anderson-instilled notion of guilds, I asked her if
 she wanted to be in my gang. It turns out that this
 wasn't an option, as by giving the book
 to the priest I had
 become a Player
 Killer, and wasn't
 welcome anywhere.
 Obvious, when you think
 about it. Purdie suggested
 that I restart the game as
 another character, and then,
 rapidly tiring of my constant questioning
 attempted to put a spell on me before
 running off with another bloke to find
 a bank. Typical. In a fit of anger, I
 senselessly attacked a bouncer and
 was swiftly dealt with. Desperate
 and miserable, I found a shelter,
 sat down with my head in my
 hands and wept. Please don't
 make me go out there again.
*The adventure continues
 next month...*





GRAVIS 



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GADGETS

An intriguing round-up of all the latest hardware, good and bad, together with five of the best new movie releases on DVD...

BABY CD-RW

★ £229 • Amacom • (020) 8993 7373 • www.amacom-tech.com

With all manner of removable media available, from Jaz drives to FlipDisks (reviewed last issue), it's often overlooked that the best answer to your storage problems is often right under your nose. Although only able to store a few hundred megabytes, CDs are still the best way of saving files, for the simple reason that they are so versatile. Amacom's Baby CD-RW, being one of the smallest CD writer/re-writers on the market is more versatile than most, being lightweight and extremely portable. The best thing about it is that you can hook it up to your PC at work and take it home every evening. Designed primarily for the laptop brigade, it comes bundled only with a PCMCIA card and a USB connector has to be bought separately for Mac users.

Installation is so simple a chimp couldn't go wrong and with the bundled software, Nero 5 OEM, you'll be committing files and MP3s to disc within minutes. Personally, we would have preferred Adaptec's CD Creator software, but that's only because we're used to it.

The power socket and interface connector seemed a little loose on the model we tested, which could mean that constantly hooking the device up could strain the connections. Elsewhere, the build was of the highest quality and, although the Baby CD-RW is not the fastest or indeed cheapest drive on offer, it's reliable, sturdy and above all portable.

★★★★★

★ The BABY CD-RW may not be the fastest CD burner around, but it's the best portable on the market.



★ Fanatec Le Mans Wheel costs less than a decent joystick and is twice as durable.

FANATEC LE MANS WHEEL

★ £49.99 • Dragonfly Interactive • (0118) 9893959 • www.fanatec.com

Some people don't get driving games. These are the ones that haven't clamped a wheel to their desk and played them the way God intended. Fire up *Midtown Madness* with a wheel and, if you're not having fun within five minutes, you should think about ending your stay on this miserable planet.

Don't think you can afford one? This little beauty costs less than a decent joystick and about the same as a full-on night on the town, and won't give you the headaches inherent in the latter. Having said that, the lack of a manual and general unhelpfulness makes it a bit of a bind to get up and running, but as soon as you work out how to use the supplied software to map the controls to the keyboard, you're laughing.

It hasn't got force feedback effects, but at this price you wouldn't expect it to. Nor would you have any right to expect the build quality or leather steering wheel, but you get both for under £50. There's also a shiny and very satisfying gear stick stuck on the side, which rounds off a very tidy package. The only beef we've got is that the pedals don't give as much purchase as we'd have liked, but at this price that could be construed as nit-picking, so we're going to shut up. ★★★★★

DVDS

CARLITO'S WAY

★ Certificate: 18 • £19.99 • Universal Studios • Out now
After a string of painfully mediocre films, Brian De Palma finally hit the mark again with this 1993 tale of drugs, mafia and the internal struggle of a criminal mind. Al Pacino is the drug daddy who leaves prison with a vow of going straight. A barely recognisable Sean Penn is Pacino's coke-addict lawyer and all-round sidekick, and between them and the various thugs and hoodlums out to make a name for themselves, the action rarely lets up. Despite the fact that the ending – à la *Casino* – is given away at the start, which makes the film in essence a highly stylistic flashback, De Palma's flourishes never get in the way of a good story. But these stylised visual elements do make this DVD edition all the more essential. A timely return to form.

Extra features: Trailer • Production, cast and filmmakers' notes.
★★★★★



HEAVY METAL

★ Certificate: 15 • £19.99 • Columbia/Tristar • Out now
Unlike the game-based sequel (reviewed on page 74), this animated anthology of stories culled from America's *Heavy Metal* magazine has become a cult classic with stoned students, thanks to the liberal use of badly drawn breasts. Ground-breaking and innovative at the time, some of the animation now looks crude. On the whole it's watchable, but some of the scenes drag on and the soundtrack, featuring dire status-quo bands such as Nazareth and Blue Oyster Cult, is certainly an acquired taste.

Extra features: Documentary • Full-length 'rough' • Deleted scenes • Heavy Metal artwork and production gallery
★★★★★



ONHAND WEARABLE PC

★ £200 • Sanderstead Senses • (020) 8657 1172 • www.onhandpc.com

Most of us in the PC ZONE office use some sort of PIM software on our PCs, whether it's Microsoft Outlook or Lotus Organizer. Although, we don't use these things properly, so details of meetings and important phone numbers are often left on scraps of paper and lost. If we each had an OnHand Wearable PC, our lives might be that much easier and, with a price and functionality comparable to palm-size PCs, not to mention its size, the OnHand PC certainly has its attractions.

Now it has to be said that it's not the most stylish watch on the block, and the black number we were sent is marginally less cool than those calculator watches we all wore back in the early '80s. But, at £200, it's the functions you should be more concerned with and, on the whole, the OnHand is an impressive piece of kit. Address books, expenses, schedules and memos are easily managed,

both thanks to the unobtrusive joystick that rests below the screen and the docking station and PC software that comes bundled in the box. If only we had made full use of our PC PIM software, we could easily have synchronised the OnHand PC to use the same information.

Unfortunately,

we're a lazy bunch and spent most of the time trying to convert mucky pictures so that we could view them on the black-and-white display and playing the handful of the naff games that are installed. ★★★★★

It may not look cool, but the OnHand Wearable PC will organise your life.

JANSPORT LAP STATION

★ £69.99 • JanSport • (0845) 6031930 • www.jansport.com

Some of the gadgets we've featured across these pages have been downright weird. Others don't seem to serve any function at all, and you wonder how they evolved from a stupid idea to an actual saleable product. Then there are those that fit into the 'only in America' category, like the Lap Station from JanSport.

What you get for your cash is a high-quality and comfortable backpack that has been designed to transport your laptop around in comfort when you're trawling the mountain tops and the valley bottoms.

Inside you've got a massive array of CD compartments and the like, and in a fit of professionalism that goes way beyond the call of duty, JanSport has even included a rubber exit port for your headphone cord.

A few questions? Did your laptop come with a decent case when you bought it? Are you quite happy to lug it around like this, or do you want your hands free for waving at people while you're walking. If you're content then you don't need to spend a not-inconsiderable amount of cash on this. If not then you can stick a couple of stars on the score and forget everything we've said because as far as far as comfort and quality go we've got no complaints. ★★★★★

The JanSport Lap Station is another one to throw in the bottom of the wardrobe.

WINGMAN RUMBLEPAD

★ £29.99 • Logitech • (01738) 70900 • www.logitech.com

When it comes to gamepads, Microsoft's SideWinder is a safe bet. You can daisy-chain for two-player action and, in terms of comfort and compatibility, they are second-to-none. Logitech is probably second in the pecking order, but with the Rumblepad it's stolen a march on its multinational rivals.

Install the software, connect the controller to a USB port (yes, you're going to need Windows 98), move to the test screen and you'll see why. Two motors hidden inside are there to

provide vibrations, rumbles and general force feedback niceties in supported DirectX games. The effects are actually stronger than the PlayStation DualShock equivalents and add to a variety of genres, although driving fans are probably going to get the most out of them.

When you feel like a rest, you can switch all the effects off and the Rumblepad becomes a standard controller, allowing you access to the two analogue thumbpads.

The fact that the pad is USB means that you can connect more than one to your PC, but there are a couple of flaws in the design. For starters, the pad is constructed almost entirely out of right angles, and unlike the SideWinder it doesn't feel that comfortable to hold. The two analogue thumb sticks are also too loose for our liking, although there's definitely enough buttons and triggers to keep everyone happy. ★★★★★

WingMan Rumblepad is likely to benefit driving fans the most.

THE SEARCHERS

★ Certificate: U • £15.99 • Warner Home Video

Westerns don't begin and end with Sergio Leone. *The Searchers*, starring John Wayne in his first anti-hero role, is considered to be a classic and, in typically flawless Ford style, it starts with a door opening and ends with the same door closing. In between, a familiar tale of violence and racism is played out between the main character, Ethan Edwards and Native Americans. It's hardly politically correct, but Ford paints a picture that's far less black and white as you might have imagined from a film made in 1956. Even Scorsese has admitted its influence, so it's got to be good.

Extra features: Trailer • Jeffrey Hunter interview • Setting up production feature • Natalie Wood interview.

★★★★★

THE TOWERING INFERNO

★ Certificate: 15 • £15.99 • Warner Home Video

What do you do when you're trapped on top of the world's tallest building, with a raging fire below? Hint: you're better off jumping, then romping with your mistress before strapping a wet towel around your face and running for safety.

As far as disaster films go, *The Tearing Inferno* is the granddaddy. Superb special effects (considering the film was made more than 20 years ago) made this the stuff that nightmares were made of. However, at nearly three hours, it reaches Oliver Stone territory. Perhaps it could have done with a bit of judicious cutting, ie losing the bad drama and leaving us with the fire.

Extra features: Trailer

★★★★★

DOLORES CLAIBORNE

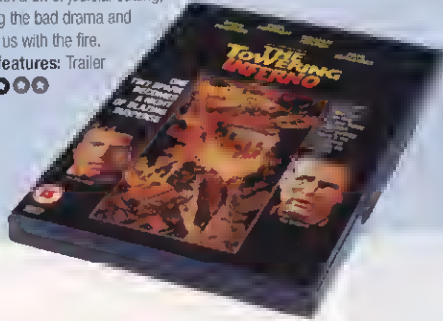
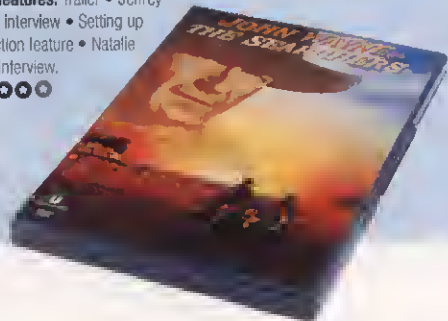
★ Certificate: 18 • £15.99 • Warner Home Video

Stephen King might have made his money penning supernatural horror epics, but few of his traditional bloody tales have fared well on the big screen. *Dolores Claiborne* falls outside of his usual remit, and along with *Misery*, *Shawshank* and *Green Mile*, is eminently watchable, thanks to strong performances from Kathy Bates and Jennifer Jason Leigh. If you're after a schlock test then you're going to be very disappointed with the disturbing drama that's played out through flashbacks and a mother/daughter relationship that's anything but functional.

Extra features: Trailer • Audio commentary by Taylor Hackford

★★★★★

BUY ONLINE FROM WWW.BLACKSTAR.CO.UK WWW.CO.UK



WALKING RIGHT INTO IT

★ REMINISCING Martin Korda



Many, many years ago, when I was just a wee nipper, I remember reading one particularly amusing letter in a PC leisure

magazine. One disgruntled reader was bitterly complaining that walkthroughs shouldn't be printed in the magazine, claiming that having read the *Leisure Suit Larry* walkthrough, there was no longer any point in him continuing with the game, as he'd found out exactly how it would end. The reply he received was obvious, if you don't want to know what happens, then don't read the walkthrough from start to finish. This is exactly why we always break ours up into so many sections, so that you can easily find the part you're stuck on, without having to read too much about the rest of the game. But, of course, you probably already knew that. Anyway, hope you enjoy the section and we'll see you all next month...

IN TRUBS THIS MONTH...

118 CHEAT MASTER

Keith Pullin shows you how to end all your frustrations with some very satisfying cheats.

118 DEAR KEITH

Once again the master himself, Mr Keith Pullin, comes to the rescue.

120 DEUS EX

In this player's guide Paul Mallinson shows you the best path to becoming a super spy.

124 GROUND CONTROL

Mission by mission Craig Vaughan surrenders the secrets behind this glorious game.

128 DEAR WANDY

Need to find a solution to a niggling technical pain? Our resident techie Wandy is here to help.

130 WATCHDOG

Have you found faults that you just can't seem to get fixed? Then allow the consumers' champion Adam Phillips to find out some answers...

YOUR HOSTS



Adam Phillips



Keith Pullin



Martin Korda

CHEAT MASTER

When everything else is going down, cheating is the only way up

★ CHEATMEISTER Keith Pullin

ON THE CD



More cheats, tips and solutions on the over CD this month. Find out what's in store by looking at the Editorial section of your CD-RDM browser.

NEED HELP?

If your problems persist, you can solve them if you...

WRITE TO Dear Keith/Cheat Master, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 8FF

EMAIL letters.pczon@dennis.co.uk with Dear Keith or Cheat Master in the subject line.

SUBMARINE TITANS

Strategy First

Press 'Enter' during the game and then type any of these titanic cheats:

- FOW** Reveals entire map
- TECH** Gives all technology
- ENERGY** Tops up energy to max
- AIR** Full air
- SILICON** Full silicon
- METAL** +1000 metal
- GOLD** +1000 gold
- CORIUM** +5000 corium
- EXITON** +1000 gold, +5000 corium, +10000 metal

ICEWIND DALE Interplay

Make a backup of the icewind.ini file before continuing. Oh, and also make sure the v1.05 patch is installed. Done that? Good. Let us begin.

Edit the icewind.ini file in the game directory with any text editor. Enter the line 'Cheats=1' under the '[Game Options]' section. Start the game and press Ctrl and Tab to activate the console. Now type: "CHEATERSDOPROSPER:Enable CheatKeys();" exactly as it is

typed here to enable the cheat mode. Now all you have to do is press the following keys during the game:

- Ctrl and J** Move selected characters to pointer position
- Ctrl and R** Heal or resurrect the selected character or portrait
- Ctrl and Y** Kill selected monster or NPC with no EXP
- Ctrl and 4** Display trigger polygons; shows traps
- Ctrl and 9** Display character bounding boxes

By pressing 'Ctrl' and 'Tab' during the game you can also try these case-sensitive cheats:

- CHEATERSDOPROSPER:FirstAid();** Healing potions, antidotes and scrolls
- CHEATERSDOPROSPER:SetCurrentXP([x]);** Where x is number of XP
- CHEATERSDOPROSPER:ExploreArea();** Full map
- CHEATERSDOPROSPER:Hans();** Teleport party to pointer
- CHEATERSDOPROSPER:Add Gold([x]);** Where x is gold in party total
- CHEATERSDOPROSPER:Midas();** Add 500 gold to party total
- CHEATERSDOPROSPER:CreateItem([x]);** Where x is any item code below:

Item code	Item Description
AMUL01	Necklace of Missiles
AROW07	Arrow of Dispelling
AX1H01	Battle Axe
BELT02	Golden Girdle
BLUN05	Mace +1
BOLT02	Bolt +1
BOOK03	Tome +1 of Constitution
BOOT01	Boots of Speed
BOW01	Composite Long Bow
BRAC06	Gauntlets of Ogre Power
BULL02	Bullet +2
CHAN06	Mithril Chain Mail +4
CLCK02	Cloak of Protection +2
DAGG03	Dagger +2
DART02	Dart +1
HALB02	Halberd +1

- HAMM03** War Hammer +2
- HELM03** Helm of Glory
- MISC3S** Horn Coral Gem
- OTN03** Potion of Hill Giant Strength
- PLAT05** Full Plate Mail +1
- PRING01** Ring
- SCRL04** Protection from Cold
- SCRL1Q** Scroll of Vampiric Touch
- SHLD06** Large Shield +1
- SW1H01** Bastard Sword
- SW2H01** Two-Handed Sword
- WAN002** Wand of Fear
- XBOW03** Heavy Crossbow of Accuracy

HEAVY METAL FAKK 2

Gathering Of Developers

Here's a handy console cheat to get things ticking along. On the title screen select the 'Video/Audio Menu', then go into Advanced Options and click Checkmark Console. Start playing the game as normal, activate the console by pressing the '~' key, and now enter any of these codes:

- god** God mode
- give all** All weapons and items
- health 100** Maximum health
- notarget** No target mode - enemies don't attack
- noclip** No clipping mode - allows player to walk through walls
- eventlist** List all commands
- map #** Go to map # (select one from list below...)

blood	cemetery
cliff1	cliff2
creeperpens	end
fakkhhouse	fog
gruff	gruff_cinema
homes1	homes2evil
homes2good	intro
landersroost	oracle
oracleway	otto
over	shield
swamp1	swamp2
swamp3	zoo
towncenter_good	training
under	water
towncenter_evil	



Get to be Shogun the easy way. Cheat.

WARLORDS 3: REIGN OF HEROES Mindscape

Press 'F8', type in one of these codes below (with spaces) and hit enter to activate the cheat:

I am lazy	Conquer all cities	run spot run	All Units have 99 movement	lord of the mana	Cities without Mana get 1 per turn anyway	.foundsomecu.	copper in all provinces
burn baby burn	Raze all sites into tanks	purple heart	All units receive medals	king of the castle	All cities become citadels	.prototypearmy.	unlimited army life
If I were a rich man	10,000 extra money	there can be only one	100 Experience for selected hero	but now I can see not easy being green	Reveal map	.conan.	removes buildings and armies from map, negative Koku, play as rebels
Just for grant	All units change into dragons	show me the mana name that tune	20 extra mana Change music				
dragon rush	All units change into dragons						
hiho hiho	City production time set to 1						

SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR Electronic Arts

Even on the easiest setting *Shogun* is one hell of a battle. These codes can be entered on the overhead map of Japan for some well-needed help. NB. Depending on the version, some codes may not work.

.muchkoku.	unlimited Koku
.diggings.	reveal map

DARK REIGN 2

Activision
Start the game by adding the following command line parameter to the dr2.exe file so it reads like this: dr2.exe -cmd:"gamegod.studiomode 1;sys.runcode studio"

PHONE FOR HELP

Having trouble with a game and can't wait to see a reply in these pages? Then you need to check out...

THE PC ZONE TIPS
HELPLINE ON
0906 466 4475

OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK, 9AM-11PM

On the rare occasion that they can't help, your query will be passed on to a support team who guarantee to find you an answer within 24 hours.

• Calls cost £1.50 per minute at all times. Charges will appear on your standard telephone bill. If you do not pay the bill yourself, seek permission from whoever does pay it before calling. If you have any problems, please call Customer Services on 0870 800 6185

Once the game has loaded, click the tools button on the lower right of the screen and then click load. You can now select any level from the game and check out all the cinematics.

DEAR KEITH

There's a way around everything and Keith Pullin has all the answers

BLOODY HARD

Q I'm playing *Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption* and I've made it to London and the Setite Temple, but I'm having problems getting through there. Where should I go? Can you give me any hints because I'm seriously struggling now.

Lou Dean, County Ross

A Just before the Setite Temple is a brothel in the East End, it contains loads of juicy, fleshy female humans just gagging to be eaten. Head there to rejuvenate yourself before tackling the temple and you should find it much easier going.

WOMEN'S PROBLEMS

Q I'm playing *Diablo II*, which you totally underrated by the way, and I can't kill that demon thing at the end of Act II. I've wandered around the area to go up a couple more levels (I'm a level 22 Amazon) in order to get some more skill points, but whatever happens I just can't kill the bloody thing. Please tell me what to do - this is driving me nuts.

Paul Price, Chichester

A OK, this boss is about as tough as they come. The only effective way to destroy it is to run in close and hit it

with some kind of two-handed weapon like a Trident, and also use the hugely lethal Impale skill. Also keep gulping down health potions and make sure you've got a good stock of mana potions handy. That's all there is to it.

A GENERAL MESS

Q I have this annoying problem with *Shogun: Total War*. Whenever I engage in a battle that I should really win - even though my numbers always outweigh that of the opposing force - my rabble of an army gets absolutely pulverised. Sometimes an army of about 300 gets trounced by a small group of 50 rebels - it's ridiculous. I don't know what the hell is going on. Why exactly is this happening?

Troy Harrington, Slough

A This could be happening for a number of reasons. The first and most probable reason for your failure is that you are not leading your troops into battle with a decent general. You need to make sure that your general is better than your enemy's general at all possible. Secondly, you need to make sure that the kinds of troops you are attacking with are suited to the battle ahead. In other words, if you're

about to fight archers, make sure you have some archers to fight back with. Try these tips out first and if you still get no joy, well - try cheating instead.

REAL CAR

Q Apparently in *Viper Racing* you can drive a Lamborghini. Is this true? Please tell me it is - I love Lamborghinis.

Adam Wick, Littlehampton

A You're not superficial. Maybe you should be dating one of those nasty, money-grubbing Spice Girls. OK then, go into the game, pause it and select 'options', then 'hacks'. Now type 'morepowerthebetter' and you should be driving your dream machine. Weirdo.

MONSTER MOVIE SHOW

Q Is it true that you can go into a drive-through cinema in *Monster Truck Madness 2*? I can't find it. Any ideas?

Rob Michaels, Havant

A Select the Scrapyard Run track and drive until you reach a set of railroad tracks. Turn left at these tracks and keep following them until the drive-in appears on the right. There's no actual point to any of this, you know, still as long as you're happy...

EXTERMINATED

Q I'm playing *Deus Ex*, which I'm thoroughly enjoying. I think I'm pretty near the end now as I've made it through to Area 51 and things are getting pretty tough to say the least. To tell you the truth, I can barely get anywhere at all on this level because I'm shot to pieces by a mystery assailant as soon as I move. What am I doing wrong? Who is killing me? Please help if you can.

Mark Cutler, Hull

A You are being shot by a sniper in a tower behind the helipad. Take him out ASAP and you should be in the clear. Piece of piss.

PLAIN OLD MANIAC

Q Are there any cheats that can give me a bit of a boost in *Mars Maniacs* for the PC?

George Randall, Epping

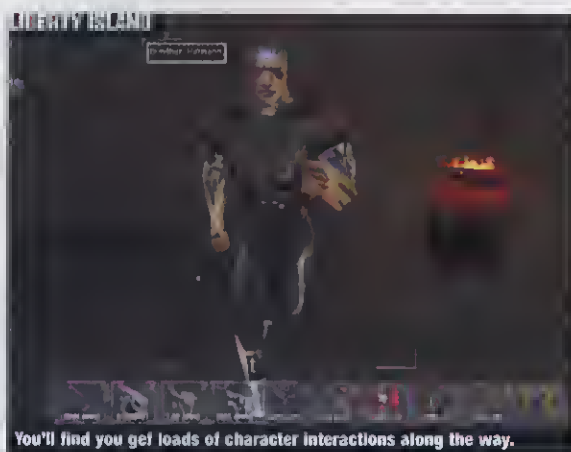
A I know it's for the PC - this being PC ZONE. Duh!. Anyway, yes, there are some cheats. All you need to do is change your player name to 'lazy' to make the game move slowly, or 'blast' to get lots of turbo. It's hardly demanding stuff. Anyway, I hope this helps. **PCZ**

DEUS EX

PLAYER'S GUIDE: PART ONE

Learn how to become a super spy in the first part of *Paul Mallinson's* definitive *Deus Ex* player's guide

★ REVIEWED PCZ #93 SCORE 94%



You'll find you get loads of character interactions along the way.



You will need strength if you want to throw things around.



The easy way into the NSF hide-out – for the price of a candy bar.

Deus Ex certainly is a joy to play if you're partial to a bit of thinking with your gun. Yes, *thinking*.

The brilliant role-playing, adventure, shooter-type gameplay in this game not only requires nerves of steel, but it also thrusts upon you concepts such as: moral judgement, and 'oh shit, this gun's so heavy I can hardly move, better rethink', so it's not all running around with shotguns and ammo. It's tough. So let's go straight to the chase. How to beat *Deus Ex* in two easy instalments. Here goes the first part...

THE VERY START

Spend starter skill points wisely. Upgrade rifle, computers and electronics to 'trained'. When it comes to using skill points, it's always better to save your game before making any decisions.

LIBERTY ISLAND Mission: Rescue Gunther Hermann and capture terrorist leader

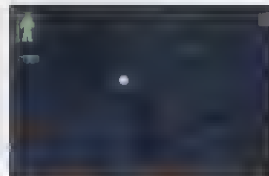
Your first mission to rid the Statue of Liberty of terrorists is a piece of cake compared to later missions. You'd be wise taking the Sniper Rifle at the start. A GEP (Guided Explosive Projectile) gun is a good alternative, but it's noisy.

Sneak your way around to the back of the Statue (take out guards with Electric Prod, knife and rifle, and hide their bodies in the shadows near the shorting generator bunker and then climb up the containers. That way you'll avoid most of the guards.

At this point, you can either head downstairs to rescue your trapped colleague, or continue

upwards toward the terrorist leader. Our advice is go downstairs first, deactivate all the security consoles, clean out the cash machine and secure the area.

Next, sneak up the stairs until you reach a square section of the tower with a door in each wall. But be careful entering. There are gas grenades on the walls, defuse them if you can. Then go up the stairs quietly, kill the guards, confront the leader and take the Augmentation upgrade canister.



Ⓜ The back entrance to the Statue of Liberty.

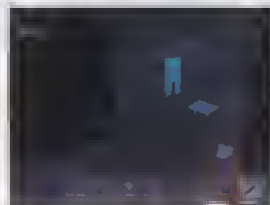
UNATCO HQ Mission: Report to Manderley for next mission

During this early part of the game you'll frequently return to base for ammo/health/bio top-ups. Grab every piece of ammo/kit you can, then talk to Manderley and get your next mission. But before leaving, don't forget to use the Augmentation upgrade canister on a Med Bot. Our advice is to go for the Muscle option.

BATTERY PARK Mission: Locate Ambrosia and rescue hostages

Sneak into Castle Clinton either via the back window, or give the kid a candy bar and get the code for the secret entrance behind the soda machine. Infiltrate the secret NSF bunker and kill the terrorists. Find the barrel of Ambrosia by the bay doors, but watch out for the terrorist with the flame-thrower. Before you

leave, break into the office and get the second Augmentation canister from the safe – a guard has the safe key. You can also disable cameras and turrets if necessary. Talk to Anna and be nice because she'll give you two EMP grenades, then go to the subway entrance and either disable the laser trips with EMP grenades, or sneak in through the ventilation shafts and kill the enemy from within. But be very careful not to set off any of the explosive containers littered about the place.



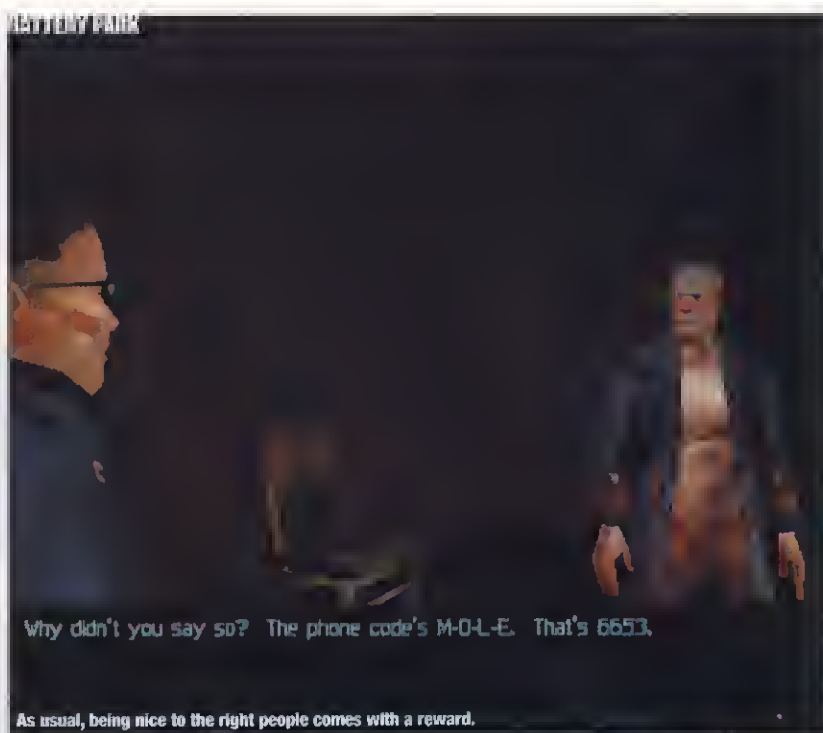
Ⓜ It's essential that you pick up every one of these.

HELL'S KITCHEN Mission: Find and destroy NSF generator

Once you've explored Paul's apartment and all the shooting's died down, search NSF for dead bodies until you find the key for Osgood's. Go there and unlock the door to access the ladder leading to the rooftops. Avoiding the booby traps, scale the top of building and carefully snipe all the terrorist guards patrolling the area. Loot every body for ammo before entering the NSF base. Take the ladder to the top of the base, which should now be clear of guards if you did your sniping earlier, then silently creep downstairs without tripping the laser, or alerting the guards. The generator is at the bottom of the base – destroy it by shooting the explosive barrels nearby. There's



Shoot the explosive barrels to destroy the generator.



Why didn't you say so? The phone code's M-O-L-E. That's 6653.

As usual, being nice to the right people comes with a reward.

a heavily-defended Aug upgrade canister in an office in the basement. The code's 9923, it you can make it there.



On the rooftops, learn to snipe.

UNATCO HQ

Mission: Report to Manderley then report to Sam Carter

Recuperate and report, then go install the new Augs you found. Our advice is go for Run Silent and Environmental Resistance.

BATTERY PARK

Mission: Locate NSF airfield

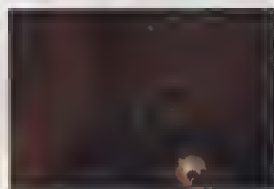
Head to the subway. Notice keypad in phone booth? The code is in a locked box in shanty town, or can be obtained by talking to Harley Filben (informant) and Curley (tramp in shanty town).

BROOKLYN BRIDGE STATION

Mission: Restore water supply for mole people

There's a keypad underneath the sinks in the Ladies' bogs. A guy called Charlie Finn has the code, but he wants you to restore the water supply before he'll give it to you. To do this, you need at least one LAM to clear the fallen beams from the room at the end of the station. Lenny the junkie has a LAM and will exchange it for

drugs. El Ray, the boss of a gang upstairs, also has one, but expects you to kill the drug dealer downstairs to earn it. Once you've got one, blow the place sky-high, and turn the valves back on. Charlie Finn will then reveal the code, which is 54B2.



Doing society a favour: killing a drug dealer.

MOLE TUNNELS

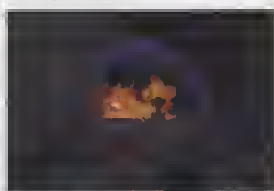
Mission: Unlock the Gents

These tunnels are crawling with NSF, so should be traversed carefully. Also, the civilians wandering around will bolt if they see you with a weapon drawn, so stay hidden to avoid starting a free for all. As you enter the level, head right and kill the NSF. In one of the three rooms, there are two cardboard boxes – destroy them to uncover a hidden 'key' brick in the wall/floor. Press it to open a secret room. Inside, there's the key and a flame-thrower – and a terrorist who surrenders. Now go to the other end of the tunnel and unlock the Gents' bog door.

Continue down forked corridor, bypass trip wires or steam jets and take out the lone guard. Avoiding the camera and the four turrets, get the key from him and unlock the door.

Next, if you jump the bridge: don't hesitate for a second because it collapses. If you fall

into the water, you can escape via a submerged tunnel in the bottom left of the pool. Two security robots block your way next, but they can easily be avoided by sneaking through a hole in the wall.



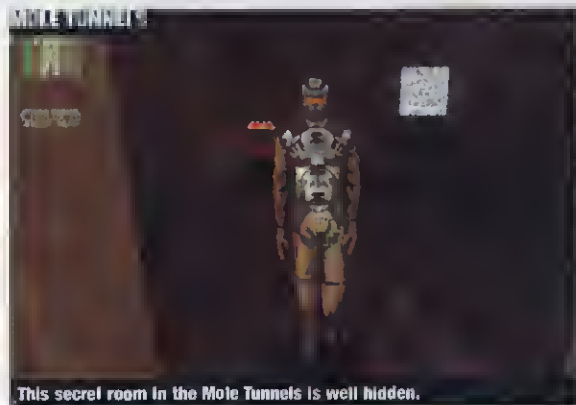
Give those damn robots what they deserve.

HELIBASE

Mission: Locate three barrels of Ambrosia

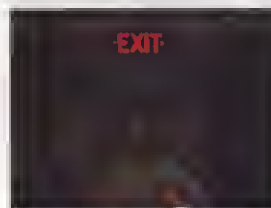
Knock out the camera immediately above you. The first barrel of Ambrosia is right in front of you. Take out the guards, but be quiet and hide the bodies. The NSF guard in the toilet has a key to the Helibase security room (located on the top left balcony), where you can disable cameras and turrets and plunder a secret armoury switch behind the plant pot.

There are more than seven heavily-armed terrorists (one with a flame-thrower) guarding the helicopter pad. The best way of despatching them is with a carefully-placed LAM trap, or by shooting the explosive barrels. Also, there's a sniper on a gantry who should be taken out as soon as possible. If you haven't disabled the camera/turret at the end of the exit corridor, blow it up from a distance with the Light Anti-Tank Weapon. Then it'll be safe to access the lift to the airfield (note for swimmers: in the corner of the

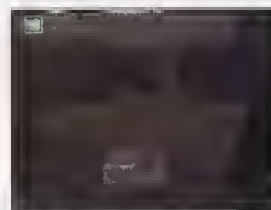


This secret room in the Mole Tunnels is well hidden.

Helibase there's a manhole leading to a watery alternative route).



Deactivate the camera at the far end of this corridor, or die horribly.



Get the Helibase security key ASAP and disable all cameras.

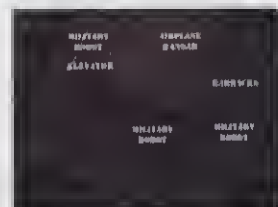
AIRFIELD

Mission: Assassinate Juan Ivanovich Lebedev and locate remaining Ambrosia

Avoiding detection by the patrolling robots, sneak round

the side of the main hangar and over to the Boathouse. There are numerous guards on patrol near the gate to the south, so be extremely careful. Look for a metal container with ladders and climb up. Take great care to remain out of sight of robots and snipe the last guard by the Boathouse. With that done, destroy the robots by shooting the explosive barrels when they're near them. Now it should be easy to enter the Boathouse where, after killing the guard, you will find the East Gate Key and the second barrel of Ambrosia.

Next, head to the barracks. Take out the two guards and get the hangar code from the footlocker in the dormitory.



There are five robots patrolling the airfield.

CRASH COURSE SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR BEGINNERS

It's not all about shooting, sniping and hacking. It involves thinking on your feet and learning and spending your starter skills wisely

HACKING

If your hacking skill is low, ready yourself before 'going in' and be quick with your mouse movements. When the hack bar goes red, exit quickly or you'll set the alarms off.

ATMS

Hacking cash machines is an easy way to make money, but it is often better to use found personal account codes because the money's better.

SECURE THE AREA

Often the best way of securing an area full of guards is to rapidly run from one to the other, shooting each with a single bullet to the head, then disabling the alarms. But it takes a brave and skilful player to be viable.

IDEAL SNIPING POSITION

If a situation seems impossible, sneak around until you find the ideal place to snipe from. There usually is one.

UNATCO PASSWORDS

These might come in handy during the game, but be careful using them or you may end up ahead of the story:

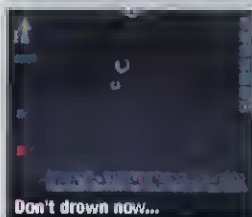
ajacobson/calve	anavarre/scryspc
ghermann/zeltgeist	JCD/bionicman
jmanderley/knight_killer	jreed/redshoes
jreyes/amlgo	klloyd/target
scarier/antique	

SWIMMING

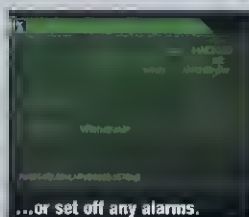
Don't get too ambitious with your swimming early on. It's easy to drown.

SHIPE ALARM BUTTONS

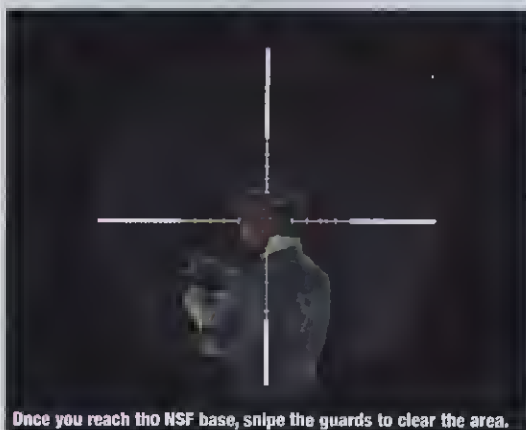
If there are a number of guards in your way, set up a snipe around an alarm button. When they run to the button after your first shot, you should be in line to pop them one by one.



Don't drown now...



...or set off any alarms.

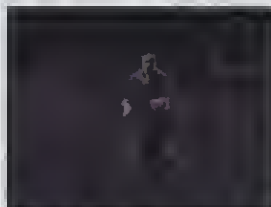


Once you reach the NSF base, snipe the guards to clear the area.

747 HANGAR

Mission: Assassinate Juan Ivanovich Lebedev and locate remaining Ambrosia

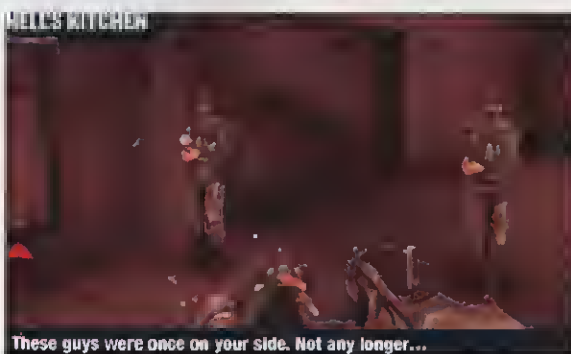
Meet Paul and hear what he has to say. Scour hangar for goodies, but don't shoot anyone – unless, of course, you really want to. Then enter the aircraft.



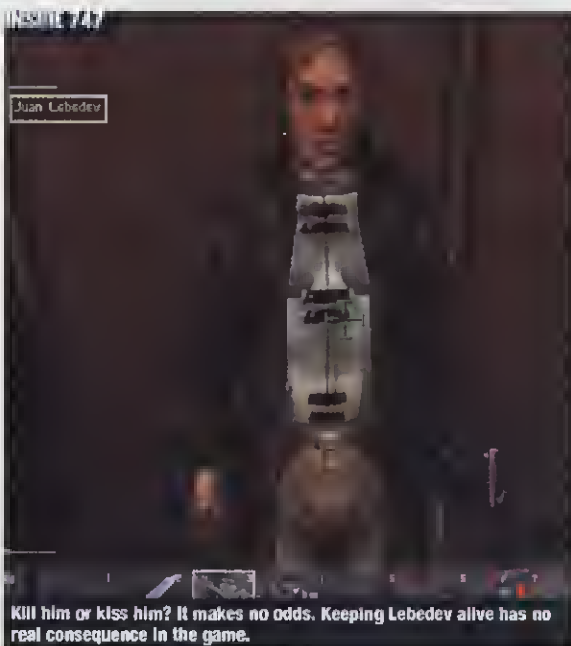
Your brother has some really interesting news for you.



After being captured you have to build your arsenal up again.



These guys were once on your side. Not any longer...



Kill him or kiss him? It makes no odds. Keeping Lebedev alive has no real consequence in the game.

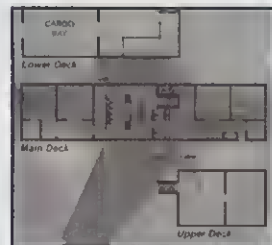
INSIDE 747

Mission: Assassinate Juan Ivanovich Lebedev then locate remaining Ambrosia

Go upstairs and get the key to the back of the plane. Then go downstairs and locate the third barrel of Ambrosia and another Augmentation canister – (code: 9905). Next, go back upstairs, unlock the door and speak to Lebedev. Now you've got several choices: you can either kill him as you were originally instructed, walk away and let Anna kill him, or kill Anna. Keeping Lebedev alive has no real consequence in the game. Once this is done, return to the helipad.



Find this key inside the 747.



You will find Lebedev in the private bedroom.

UNATCO HQ

Mission: Report to Manderley

Again, don't forget to upgrade any Augs you have. Our advice is to go for Ballistic Protection over EMP field, if you have it.

HELL'S KITCHEN

Mission: Meet Paul at his apartment; send signal from NSF base

Go to Paul's apartment and talk to him. Before leaving, stick a LAM on the wall by the door if you have one, then head to the NSF base down the road tunnel. Go to the room on the third floor with the Med Bot in it. Activate the venting and enter the adjacent room. You have to access the security console to open the trap door to the basement.

Once in the basement, avoid the red beams and drop the small metal crates on the pressure pads to disable turrets, then pick through doors until you reach a cabinet with loads of goodies in it. On top of the cabinet is a datacube with satellite dish control instructions. Inside the cabinet is a datacube with proof of the conspiracy, which you'll also need. Work your way through the traps until you reach a door leading outside. Next, you've got to transmit a signal from the top of the NSF base, but before you do that go and round up every scrap of ammo and health you can find. When you're ready, access the first computer at the top of the base (MCOLLINS/REVOLUTION) and then the second (NAPOLEON/REVOLUTION), and transmit the signal. UNATCO now become the enemy, so you'll have to fight your way through 15 heavily-armed soldiers to get

back to Paul's apartment.

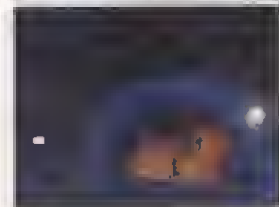
Once there, speak to Paul. You'll then hear a warning that the apartment is about to be raided. You can either run or fight, but running is advised. If you planted a LAM by the hotel door earlier, it should kill or damage most of the people who enter. Finish the rest off with another LAM, or with bullets to the head.

The subway is heavily guarded by soldiers and bots. The best thing to do is run to the door, enter the code (6282) and run down into the station (the guards don't follow). Use your Ballistic Protection Aug if you have one.

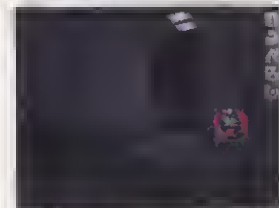
When you get to Battery Park you'll have to fight or avoid Anna Navarre, if she's still alive, then Gunther Hermann will be waiting for you. You can resist or surrender here, but fighting is futile because Hermann is invincible.



① To access NSF security use: TJJEFFERSON and NEWREVOLUTION as username and password.



① The subway entrance is heavily guarded, so use of high explosives is recommended.



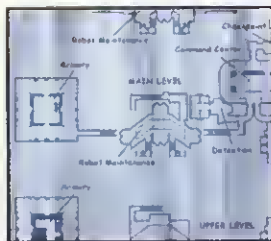
① Lay a trap before the bad guys burst through the door.

UNKNOWN LOCATION

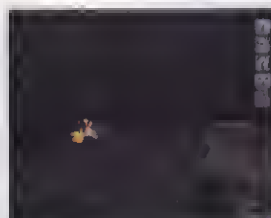
Mission: Escape

Talk to Anna, if she's still alive, then wait for Daedalus to open the door. Sneak out and grab knife off filing cabinets. Kill the first guard, take his gun and disable camera. Then kill second guard and take assault gun. Turn right into robot maintenance. Head upstairs on left and through corridor in front of you, kill four guards and take weapons. Go up to Maintenance Control, reverse bot AI (security panel on wall) and get Armoury access code from datacube on turthrust desk. Go downstairs and through the corridor to the armoury. Avoiding bots (walk closely behind them), enter armoury (code: 2971) and kill guard. Disable camera (either go upstairs and access security panel on wall, or get LAW and bomb it), then steal the weapons.

There are three guards and two dogs patrolling the command centre. Either sneak in via the tunnel or storm through the main entrance. Access the security panel to deactivate all the cameras, head into Laboratory area. Pass Nanotech lab and go straight down to Medical area. Kill guard and woman, because she sets off the alarm, then take stairs to the right (stairs to left guarded by two soldiers). But whatever you do, don't be tempted to press the button on the wall – it only opens the containment cage and lets the canine-like Karkian out. Enter Med Lab and see Paul's body, or Paul, if he's still alive. You will then be given the facility exit code by Daedalus. Now head into the Nanotech lab, kill the soldiers and the Man In Black, and access the computer (code: psherman/raven) in order to get hold of Aug upgrade canister (Aggressive Defence System or Spy Drone). Then immediately exit the facility via the door by the command centre (code: 1125).



① Use these detailed maps to your advantage.



① This is just one of the nifty ways of disabling the cameras.

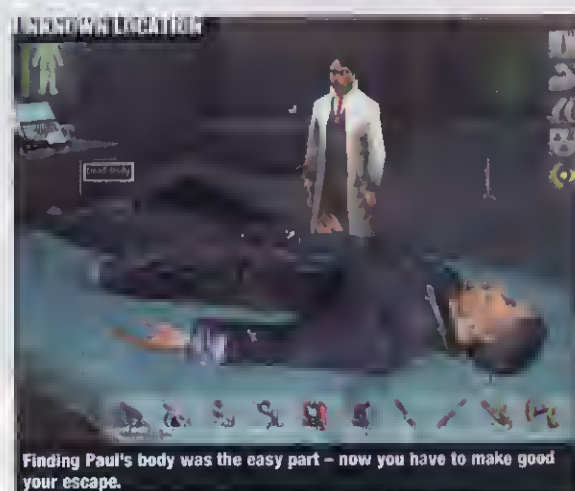
UNATCO HQ

Mission: Escape to helicopter

This is where things really get complicated. Talk to Jamie Reyes (he'll give you another Aug upgrade canister – install all Augs using Med Bot), then Sam Carter, then Alex Jacobson. If Anna Navarre's dead, Alex will give you the key to exit UNATCO. And if she isn't, you'll have to kill her and report back to him. To do this, you have to either access her computer (anavarre/scryspc) and Manderley's (jmanderley/knight_killer) to get her 'killswitch', or fight her by the exit door (tip: lay a LAM at the bottom of the stairs and get her to follow you down). Evade the rest of the guards and go outside to the helicopter.



① There are often different ways to solve the same puzzle.



Finding Paul's body was the easy part – now you have to make good your escape.

MJ12 HELIBASE: HONG KONG

Mission: Deactivate the weapons lock on the helicopter

Kill most MJ12 troops by releasing gas in under-floor tunnels (gas release code: 99871). Enter barracks via vent or down steps and kill the troops that are left (no small amount, so be very careful). The key to Flight Deck 1 is in the third locker from the left. Access security panel in Flight Deck 2 to deactivate cameras/turrets (tip: switch turrets to kill MJ12 troops above ground). Now go to Flight Deck 1 and hit the Weapons Lockdown

button. Return to the helicopter and destroy two bots that emerge, then go through 'Lockdown' door to elevator – a tip: use multitool on panel to avoid electrocution) and go on to the Wan Chi Market in Hong Kong – which is where we'll be continuing next issue. So stay tuned. [2]



① Keeping your bearings is vital part of the game.

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The 3D RTS action comes without resource management. What a refreshing change.

GROUND CONTROL

WALKTHROUGH

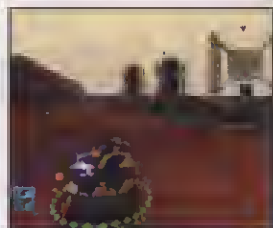
An instant hit with all who played it, *Ground Control* surrenders its secrets as **Craig Vaughan** gives a mission-by-mission debrief

★ REVIEWED PCZ #92 SCORE 87%

THE CRAYVEN MISSIONS

Crayven Mission 1

The objective here is to destroy the enemy communications relay. Head northwest keeping to the high ground to eliminate light enemy resistance. Once at the enemy base, concentrate your firepower on the communications relay before withdrawing to the safety of the pick-up point.

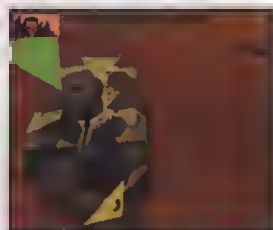


① Destroy this communications relay to complete the mission.

Crayven Mission 2

You're tasked with assisting the defection of an enemy agent.

Head north where you'll find that he has already been ambushed. Use both squads of marines to set up a safe perimeter and send your APC to render first aid. Although the enemy agent dies, he does hand over information vital for future success.



① Rescue the enemy defector to gather vital intelligence.

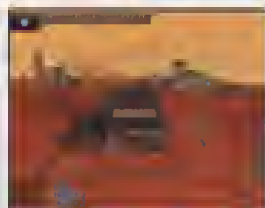
Crayven Mission 3

Tasked with destroying an enemy generator, skirt around their base and attack the power station hidden in the valley. If you're successful within the strict time limit, then reinforcements will arrive – and with the gun turrets

deactivated, it's simply a case of destroying all the buildings to ensure victory.

Crayven Mission 4

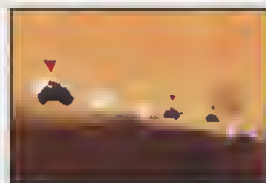
A simple mission to defend a research base turns sour when you suffer two attacks from the east, the second onslaught being reinforced by Light Hoverdynes. Use the shadows and hillsides as cover and overwhelm the enemy by making use of mortar attacks and uranium rounds. Head north using infantry rockets to pick off the Crusaders and then go south disembarking your marines to attack the enemy Howitzer.



① If the base falls into enemy hands the war is over.

Crayven Mission 5

This is a hit-and-run mission – the target being an enemy convoy. Send a squad of Light Terradynes west to anticipate the ambushes that follow. Meanwhile, send your main force northwest, where you'll receive a message that the enemy convoy has changed course. They'll be heading your way, so it's just a case of lying in wait to pick off the accompanying Hoverdynes before destroying the trucks.



① Leave the Light Terradynes as decoys while you fight the enemy.

Crayven Mission 6

Load up your vehicles with marines and head north. Divide

your foot soldiers into two groups to defend both points of attack using the hillsides as cover. Gather all your troops and head northeast, climbing a slope on the approach to the enemy base. Spread your troops thinly – with the APC to the rear – and advance very slowly, picking off the enemy. Eventually you'll push through to the Command Centre, the destruction of which completes the mission.



① Split your troops to fend off the two-pronged attack.

Crayven Mission 7

Tasked with destroying a fallen satellite, your first objective is the defence of your base. That achieved, you'll need to head

southeast to rescue Sergeant Cole. Return him to your base to reveal the location of the fallen satellite. Trek to it using the rough terrain to protect your troops from ambushes. Once the satellite is found, have your Jaegers attack it with their special weapons.

Crayven Mission 8

Your base is under attack from overwhelming forces. Divide your troops into three contingents and fend off the three-pronged attack. Eventually reinforcements will arrive, allowing you to evacuate four medical trucks. Head north, dodging the sporadic Attack Aerodynes – use your sentry guns and Light Terradynes to hold them off. Just before you reach the extraction point, send in some marines to wipe out the enemy ambush before escorting the medical trucks to freedom.

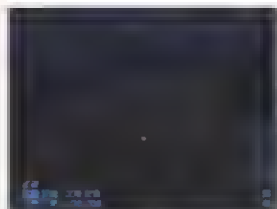
Crayven Mission 9

This mission involves a few skirmishes with the enemy prior to an attack on their outpost. Heading west, scout ahead using high ground to give the best vantage point, then use artillery to cause devastation before moving ground troops in to mop up. Reaching the outpost, stop short and use your artillery to take out the main Pulse Turrets – tailing that, target the power stations to cut the power. Keep shelling the base and eventually a pick-up point will become apparent.

Crayven Mission 10

There are three anti-aircraft bases to destroy. Recce the area surrounding each gun finding suitable high ground. Use your artillery to destroy the anti-aircraft batteries before swarming in to take out supporting troops. Should the enemy send in Hoverdynes use your artillery on them too and take out the Templars before they get too close. With all three guns

destroyed, the enemy base will become apparent. Using all your forces and special weapons, head to the base, taking out the Templars on the way. Stop off east of the main base using your Jaegers to destroy the power stations – this will cut power to the enemy base. Once inside the enemy base destroy the Command Centre and the Cathedrals around it to complete the mission.



Attack using artillery from high vantage points for best effect.

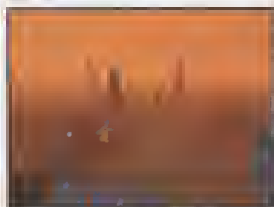
Crayven Mission 11

Acting as a military escort to a bunch of scientists, your first task is to head east to protect them while they examine a Xenofact site. On route you should lead with your main Battle Terradynes and scout with Jaegers. Halfway to your destination you'll need to use your artillery to bombard the enemy Hoverdynes and finish off any stragglers with your Battle Terradynes. At some point, the enemy units may get reinforcements (Crusader Infantry), in which case your marines can be called into action. At the Xenofact, form a defensive perimeter with your Battle Terradynes facing west. Once the boffins have done their work, you'll discover a new pick-up point. Head that way, picking off the enemy as you go. At the evacuation point, you need to survive for five minutes while awaiting rescue.

Crayven Mission 12

The task here is to take out the base, while allowing your scientists to examine another

Xenofact. To achieve this, move all your forces to the northwest. Send some infantry up the passage to the northeast to act as a lure for the enemy units. Withdraw your troops and use an artillery barrage and marine weapons to hammer the enemy units. Advance until the enemy's static units become apparent and then spread out to map the base. Take out the numerous pillboxes and the missile launchers and send some troops to meet your engineers. You'll then receive instructions to clear a passage west, and can do so using all your heavy weapons and artillery. Send the engineers through, guarding them with your APC and then set off in convoy keeping your Terradynes up front.



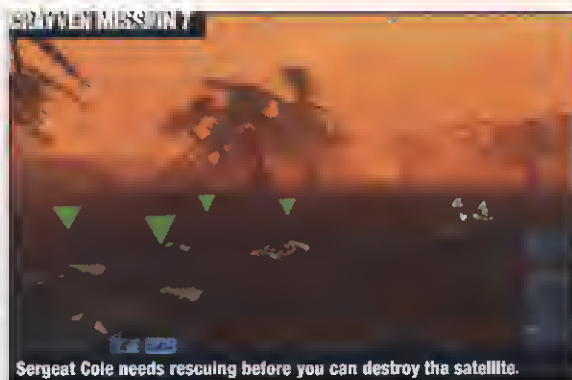
Surround the monument while your boffins do their bit.

Crayven Mission 13

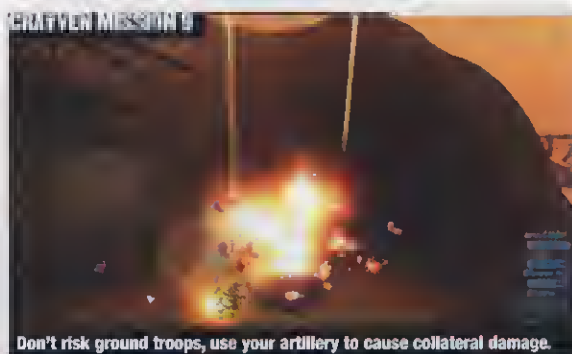
This is a straightforward mission with two objectives. Tasked with destroying some radar jamming facilities, you also get the chance to take out the enemy headquarters. Initially, send all your units north using your Jaegers to take out the Howitzer, and shell with your artillery to mop up any support troops. Once the base is in view, bombard it with your artillery to destroy the defensive turrets. Keep shelling and then send in Battle Terradynes to destroy the central turbine and biohazard tank. Finish off the jamming facility and clean out the base to complete the mission.

Crayven Mission 14

This is a 'seek and destroy' mission with numerous diverse



Sergeant Cole needs rescuing before you can destroy the satellite.



Don't risk ground troops, use your artillery to cause collateral damage.



Be sure to guard the scientists with a defensive perimeter while they examine the artefact.



Battle your way to the jamming facility and destroy it in order to progress.

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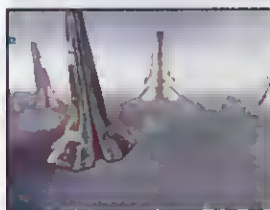
gameplay

THE GATEWAY TO GAMES

← targets. Stealth and speed are essentially the keys to success. Although the targets are unrelated and scattered throughout the map, the same general strategy applies for all of them: use marine troops to scout ahead and, once a target has been identified, take it out with your artillery and then move in with heavy guns and bombers to clean up. There's a secret base northeast of your final designated target but, other than that, it's fairly straightforward.

Crayven Mission 15

Don't even bother trying to be subtle – this is all-out war. Using all the weaponry and tactics honed in the previous missions, it's time to take the enemy out head-on. Go north and use all your weaponry on the troops guarding the outpost. Destroy this sub-base and continue north avoiding the minefield. Put all your heavy weaponry to the fore and use your rockets and artillery to pound the enemy defences. Finally, when the defences are down, move in to take out the Cathedrals and the Command Centre to ensure a well-earned victory.



Ⓢ You have to destroy the enemy base to complete the first campaign.

THE ORDER OF THE NEW DAWN CAMPAIGNS

New Order Mission 1

This mission is a straightforward game of cat and mouse with the destruction of enemy trucks being your primary goal. Drop your troops at the northern most point and head east. Engage the lightly armed Crayven troops. Leave a small contingent of marines to act as cannon fodder and send the rest northeast to the base at the centre of the map. There you will find the Crayven base largely deserted. Destroy the buildings and scout the perimeter to reveal the randomly located enemy trucks that have to be destroyed to complete the mission.

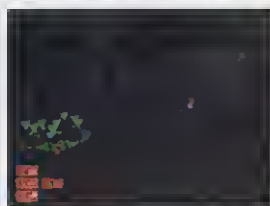


Ⓢ If you've used diversionary tactics, the enemy base will be unprotected.

New Order Mission 2

Three anti-aircraft sites need to be destroyed before enemy reinforcements arrive. The key to success is speed because you don't have the troops or the artillery to win a firefight. From the drop-zone, head south and take out the first base. That achieved, you have to charge

southeast to the second base before heading northwest to take out the third. It's pointless engaging enemy troops encountered on the way – if you arrive at the bases and they've been reinforced the situation quickly becomes impossible.



Ⓢ Enemy resistance should be negligible providing you stay one step ahead of reinforcements.

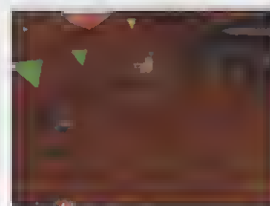
New Order Mission 3

One of your bases is about to fall into enemy hands and vital intelligence is about to be lost. Your mission involves retrieving a data crystal from the base. From your drop-zone, head southeast to the bottom of the map and then west to approach the base. This isn't the quickest route, but it allows you to avoid most of the enemy troops and a minefield, too. Once inside the base, take your APC to the southern most corner to retrieve the crystal, and then evacuate before the Crayven reinforcements arrive.

New Order Mission 4

This mission requires you to protect engineers as they break into an enemy base. Initially, head northeast to meet the engineers, and then continue on in the same

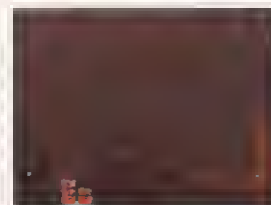
direction to take out two Battle Terradynes. Destroy them using your Electro Daggers and then the research facility will be revealed over the ridge. Storm the base and destroy Crusaders to take out the enemy marines and use the speed and manoeuvrability of your hover bikes to destroy the defensive Battle Terradynes. Escort the engineers to the research facility and defend them while they break in and steal equipment. To complete the mission, head west at speed in order to avoid reinforcements.



Ⓢ Bring the engineers here and guard them while they break in.

New Order Mission 5

This campaign requires you to follow your fellow Commander, Magnus, around the map as he wipes out enemy resistance before attacking the Crayven base. Simply follow Magnus' troops as he draws the enemy's fire. Stick to the high ground and offer supporting fire. Once the opposition has been eliminated, follow Magnus to the Crayven base and take a hillside position overlooking the base. Destroy the power station inside and ensure victory by sending in ground troops as reinforcements.



Ⓢ Follow Commander Magnus and use the naturally lofty terrain to your advantage.

New Order Mission 6

Split your troops into two groups, sending the first group southeast to a repair base where two Heavy Terradynes await repair. A convoy of engineers that need escorting to the base will join the remainder of your army and will meet up with your second contingent at the repair base. Freshly equipped, you can either launch a direct assault on the enemy base to the northwest or head directly west to take out the power generators fuelling the automated defence systems. Your newly acquired Heavy Terradynes will be able to take out the Light Terradynes and marine forces that attempt to thwart your progress and, once inside the base, you should use them to destroy the control tower to complete the mission.

New Order Mission 7

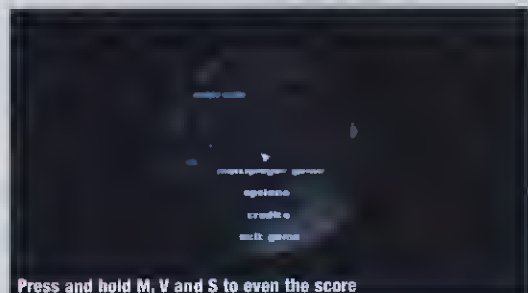
Tasked with recovering a medical truck from a Crayven base there's several ways to go about it. The most effective and fun of these is a full-frontal assault by all your forces on the base. Charge in and gain control of the medical truck

IN CONTROL

Every setting, other than *Ground Control*, provides a real challenge – so rather than surrendering, why not enhance your gaming experience by shifting the odds in your favour?

On the title screen press and hold M, V and S together to bring up a cheat box. Now type the following cheats to assist your endeavours

god god mode on
nogod god mode off
glime maps unlock all the single player campaigns
from massive with love wacky textures



Press and hold M, V and S to even the score

NEW ORDER MISSION 1



The base should be largely deserted provided you didn't blunder through the minefield.

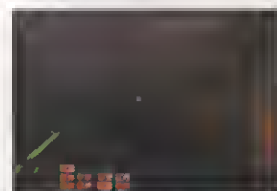
and then retreat, leaving it behind. The massed ranks of the Crayven troops will follow you, throwing everything they've got at you. It's a straight fight, so make good use of your special weapons and split your troops to set ambushes. With the Crayvens defeated, the medical truck can then make its own way to the pick-up point unmolested.



➊ This is one of the few missions where bravado and brute force are the order of the day.

New Order Mission 8

This is a very straightforward mission with the multiple objectives of destroying a supply depot to the southwest and mining facilities and fuel tanks to the south. Thankfully, the supply depot is only lightly guarded and you only need your Templars to complete the other objectives. The only complication is that you are also required to destroy all the enemy trucks. Patience is required in finding them and there's some target practice to be had taking them out.

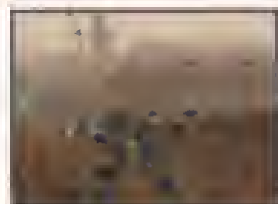


➋ Hunt down the free-roaming enemy trucks to finish the mission.

New Order Mission 9

A massive Crayven base is your primary target and you'll need to take a circuitous route to ensure success. The perimeter of the base is protected by Jaegers perched on the hilltops, but

Hoverbikes are effective against them. It's essential to gain control of the ledge overlooking the base to secure a good vantage point from which to destroy the Rocket Terradynes, G-lob Artillery and Artillery Terradynes. And with these targets destroyed, taking out the power station in the northeast corner of the base will drop the enemy defences for two minutes, giving you enough time to shell the buildings with your Heavy Artillery.



➌ This lofty perch gives you an unfair advantage in attacking the Crayven base.

New Order Mission 10

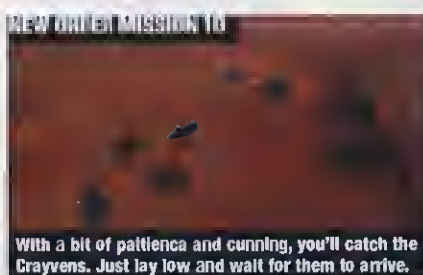
The intelligence for this mission indicates that you need to hold and control four key bridges – you don't. Simply move your troops to the bridge situated at the northeast of the map and wait to ambush the Crayven troops. Use your artillery to decimate the advancing forces and finish them off with the might of your Heavy Hoverdynes.

THE END OF THE WAR

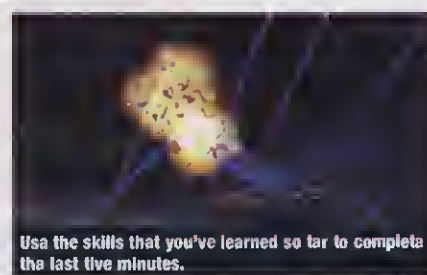
The final five missions are a test of everything you have already learnt, although, there are still a few surprises along the way, so we won't walk you through them and spoil the fun. Suffice to say that if you've managed to get this far, then a methodical and strategic approach should see you through. Be sure to scout ahead and pay particular attention to the mission briefings – they rarely lead you astray. It's very unlikely you'll complete any of these missions first time round, so a better tactic is to practice each sub-mission in isolation before linking them successfully to complete the missions and win the war. ☑



These Heavy Terradynes give the firepower needed to complete the mission.



With a bit of patience and cunning, you'll catch the Crayvens. Just lay low and wait for them to arrive.



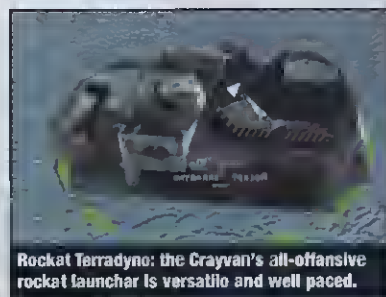
Use the skills that you've learned so far to complete the last five minutes.

WHEN TWO TRIBES GO TO WAR

The New Order and Crayvens factions have their own unique strengths and weaknesses that need to be exploited to ensure victory

The Crayvens

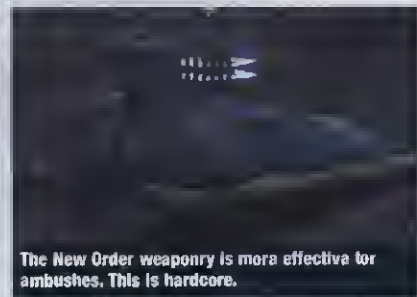
Their weaponry and vehicles are stouter but more durable than their counterparts, but their far-shooting Jaegers and unmatched Aerial Condor bombers give them an added tactical advantage in the midst of battle.



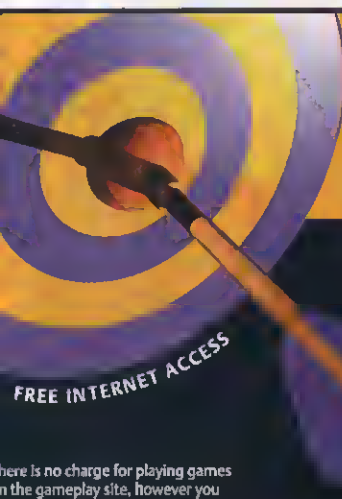
Rocket Terradyno: the Crayven's all-offensive rocket launcher is versatile and well paced.

The New Order

The New Order weaponry and vehicles lend themselves to ambushes and outflanking manoeuvres, with their Templar Infantry proving extremely effective against all opposition and the Orone Carriers superior to the Crayven armoured vehicles.



The New Order weaponry is more effective for ambushes. This is hardcore.



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EMAIL Address your letters to us at letters.pczon@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading **Dear Wandy**.

Please note: while we can assure you that we read every techie query sent to us, we are unable to offer personal replies. Also, please do not phone, as you're unlikely to reach someone who can help. Thanks.

WHEN I GROW UP...

Q I am currently an A-Level student studying at my local Sixth Form College and, a year into my course, the teachers are already pressuring us to choose what degrees we want to do and where. I seriously want to get into the PC industry and currently have an application form for IBM, but if I don't go there, it's off to university. Although, I'm not sure what I should study. The PC games industry is really appealing, and I remember a while back that you said there were courses in designing *Quake* levels, but is there something a little more serious out there? Perhaps programming, designing or something that would put my foot in the door of a job in the PC gaming world without any previous programming or designing experience? Your help would be really appreciated.

Michael Lomas

A The \$64,000 question. You could do worse than contact some of the UK companies and ask them what sort of skills they are looking for.

Remember, the world of the games programmer has moved on a lot from the 16-year-old schoolboy in his bedroom, although

there are still some about. These days, games are programmed by large teams with a bunch of diverse skills. You'll have the graphics people, long-haired arty types, designing the characters and animation; the music team, long-haired muso types, to add the atmosphere; and the programmers, long-haired social outcasts, who glue it all together with hard code. Just decide which one fits you best.

When it comes to coding, most software boils down to hard logic and advanced mathematics, so if you're really serious about getting into the low-down guts of game

implementation, then a math-based course could be a good bet. But, most importantly, grow your hair long.

EVERYTHING'S PEAR-SHAPED

Q Please help me as I have a some real problems. Namely, why doesn't my computer work properly? My autorun on game CDs doesn't work anymore and I have a bugged mouse. The mouse is very tricky in games, not letting me see around. This is getting out of hand now as I've only had my PC for a year, but my mum's four-year-old machine with a cheapo three-button mouse is fine. Should I get out to

“My mouse is very tricky in games, not letting me see around. This is getting out of hand now as I've only had my PC for a year”

SEAN PEATFIELD ON HIS MOUSE TROUBLE

town and get a new Microsoft IntelliMouse Explorer? Next on my wish list is a Proview 770 monitor, because every time I start *Unreal Tournament*, the screen changes and I have to resize and reposition it manually. Great mag by the way.

Sean Peatfield

A Whether your machine autoruns a CD or not depends on the auto insert notification setting. Depending which operating system you have, this will be hidden in different places. In Windows 95 and 98 you'll find it under the CD-ROM properties in your system hardware list (Control Panels, System, Device Manager). If you have Microsoft's *TweakUI* installed, you can choose if you want to autorun music CDs, data CDs, or both.

The mouse is probably suffering from a dirty ball and rollers. Drop the ball out and put it in a bowl of warm soapy water to soak out the grime. Then get a small screwdriver and scrape the coating of dead skin and other nice household dust particles from the two axis rollers and the tensioner visible inside the mouse itself.

Depending on the manufacturer of your mouse, you may be able to get the top



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STANLEY KEEPS HIS COOL (AND WINS A NIFTY FIFTY)

A lesson in adequate cooling and ventilation

I recently started suffering major problems under Windows 98 after assembling my second PC, having gathered together enough spares to build one, after years of upgrading.

I bought a cheap ATX case, Tyan Trinity 4DD VIA Apollo 133A motherboard, and put in a relatively old Celeron 4DD, a 3GB drive, DVD-ROM, SBLive value and GeForce 256 card. It ran fine, but once or twice blue screened with a Protection fault in VXD VMM(D1), page DD5428. I put this down to chipset adapter compatibility issues or Windows 98 behaving like, well... Windows 98.

I then wanted better frame rates playing *Vampire* using a Pentium III, so I upgraded to an 800MHz PIII EB (the Trinity M8 supports 133 FS8). Great, until I shut down the program. Blue screen, same error, pressing enter returned me to a VGA desktop with big icons. Driver problem, I thought. I flashed the motherboard with the latest BIOS (not forgetting to clear the BIOS using the motherboard jumper), got the NVIDIA Detonator

drivers, Sound Blaster Live! updates, etc. Still as unstable as ever. I then wondered about cooling. I got the occasional crash during the game, which I didn't think was the cause of it as the game couldn't have been pushing the CPU or 3D card that hard.

The Pentium had a huge heat sink and fan, the GeForce had a fan mounted on it too. I thought it can't be the temperature, but I was wrong. The case was hot to touch, the CD in the drive almost burnt

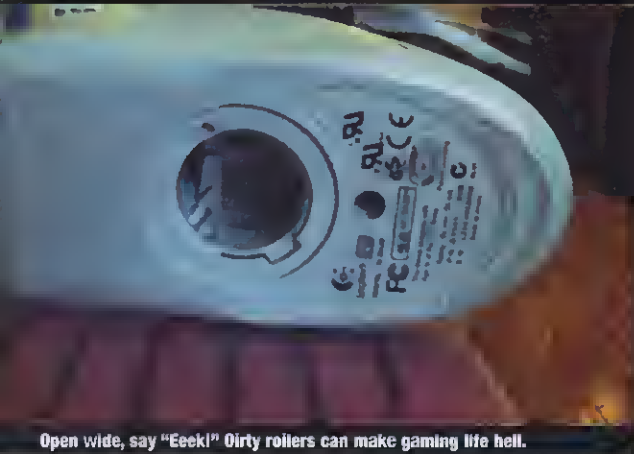
my fingers. I removed the case panels and, hey presto, stable system.

The lesson is to never ignore cooling and ventilation. I didn't blow any components or damage anything, but even in what I thought was a 'conservative' system, there was inadequate airflow. Fans don't cost much: I ordered a drive-bay exhaust fan and a slot-based one from www.3dcool.com and from Initial Impressions. Fans keep the system cool without having to remove the case cover. For around £20-30, it was worth the outlay to keep my sanity.

Stanley Mo

We've said it so many times: chill your computer. It works.





Open wide, say "Eek!" Dirty rollers can make gaming life hell.

off and clean it better that way – if you've never cleaned it before, you'll be surprised at just how much crap is in there. Oh, and be extremely careful with the tensioner, they usually have a small spring which loves to make a bid for freedom.

HIGH PING, SLOWDEM

Q I'm constantly frustrated at the mysteriously high pings I'm getting trying to play *Quake III Arena* over the Internet. I dial-up to Wireplay Internet, run Wireplay v2.30, and then enter their 'power play' area, where I'm led to believe that games are supposed to be quick. However, while my pings are constantly around the 380 mark, other gamers seem to be getting pings just below 100. As a consequence, I stand no chance in the ensuing battle. I have an 800MHz Athlon processor and 56K modem with the latest version of *Quake III*, so I don't understand what I'm doing wrong. I don't think the problem is with Wireplay Internet, because I've had similar high pings when using other ISPs.

Simon Drury

A From what you've told us, we'd point an accusing finger at the modem. Unfortunately, you don't say anything about the name or model, but from the symptoms you describe we'd hazard a guess that it's an HSP style. HSP, or Host Signal Processing, modems are popular because they are cheap. The reason for this is the modem drivers make your CPU carry out as much of the processing as possible – hence the name. Although you have a suitably fast machine, asking the CPU to nurse the modem each time it's connected is never going to be as efficient as dedicated hardware on a true V90 modem.

So, how can you tell if a modem is a beefy one or an HSP? Well, that's the tricky part. The easiest way is to look on the packaging: if it says Host Processing, WinModem or HSP anywhere, avoid it. You really want a true V90, like the Hayes

Accura we recommended a while back, or a 3Com Sportster.

CONTAGIOUS KAK

Q My problem is incredibly annoying, because I can't solve it and it doesn't seem to affect the running of my computer. My machine went tits up recently and, as a result, I've had to reinstall Windows. And every time I start up, just as the desktop and icons appear, I get an open window called `C:\Windows\StartMenu\Programs\Startup\KAK.HTA`. The window is empty and closes down again with one click. However, it's seriously annoying having it there. I've tried simply deleting the file, but something in my start-up is writing a new one each time because it just won't die.

I've had a look at its properties and it claims to be an HTML Application. I've gone through step-by-step at start-up to try and see where it's coming from, and the best guess is from a line in `autoexec.bat` saying `"C:\Windows\Start M-1\Programs\Startup\kak.hta"`. I've tried commenting this line out or deleting it. I've even tried deleting `autoexec.bat`, but nothing will kill this monster as a new `autoexec.bat` containing the line comes back.

Any chance of some advice, preferably not containing the line "You have to edit the Windows registry..."

Neil McCorkell

A You are showing the symptoms of a Kak infection. The Kak virus has been doing the rounds for quite a while now, and spreads very easily due to flaws in Microsoft's *Outlook*. Luckily, they've now patched it. Take a look at www.microsoft.com/TechNet/IE/toolbar/scripbyte.asp. You can also find full details of how to remove this virus in the following link. Unfortunately, with all things clever and sneaky, the word Registry is always present. But just follow the instructions and you'll be fine. Go to: service1.symantec.com/SUPPORT/nav.nsf/docid/2000020318071406

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Jimmy White's 2
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Jurassic Park
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Kingpin Honor Guard
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L
Lal K. Soul Reaver
Lega Lasa
Lega Island
Lega Rarers
Lega Rock Raiders
Lemmings 2
Lemmings 3D
Lies
Little Big Adventure 2
Lords of Magic SF
M
Mabinogi
Madden NFL 97 & 98
Mogin Carpet 182
Mortale Gallic
Mass Destruction
Master of Driao 182
MDK
Mechanics
Mechwarrior 2
Men in Black
Messiah
Mudlow Madness
MGM. Mand al Heav
Monopoly
Monster Truck Mad 182
Mortal Combat Series
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Motocross Madness
Motorhead
Myth
H
Hascar 2
HBA Hongtime
HBA Jam Extreme
HBA Live Series
Head 4 Speed Series
HFL Driftback Club
HHL Series
HHL Breakaway 98
Highmare Creatures
Nax
Nuclear Strike
O
Official F1 Racing
Operation Bodycount
Outpost
Owlons
Darius
P
Pandemonium 1 & 2
Pharaoh
Pinball Fantasies
Pinball
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POD
Police Quest: SWAT 2
Populous Series
Premier Man. Series
Prince of Persia
Pro Pinball
O
Oake 1, 2 & 3
R
Railroad Tycoon 182
Rainbow Islands
Rainbow Six
Rally Champ. 2000
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Rayman
Redline
Requiem: Av. Angels
Resident Evil Series
Ro Valt
Rival Rooms
Road Rash
Rogue Spear Series
Rollercoaster Tycoon
S
S.C.A.R.S.
Savannah
Scream 1, 2 & Rally
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Settlers 1, 2 & 3
Shogun: Mob. Arm. Drv.
Shogun: Total War
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Sonic 3D Blast
Sonic & Knuckles Col
Soul Reaver
South Park
Spec Ops
Spectra Core
Star Trek Series
Star Wars: Phant. Men
Star Wars: Racer
Star Wars: Force C.
Star Wars: Rogue Sqd
Star Wars: Shed. Fmp.
StarCraft
StarCraft
StarCraft
Street Fighter Series
Super Bubsy
Saper Frog
Superbike World Ch
Swat 3
SWIV 3D
Syndicate
Syndicate Wars
System Shock
T
Tarhony: The Frigate
Toko Ha Prisoners
Tarzan
Test Drive Series
Test Drive Offroad
The Cause of Man. i
The Hunt for Red Oct
The Settlers 1, 2 & 3
The Sims
Theme Hospital
Theme Park
Theme Park World
Thief 1 & 2
Time Commando
TUC 1 & 2
Tom Clancy's SSN
Tomb Raider 1, 2, 3 & 4
Tomb Raider: Last Art.
Total Annihilation
Toy Story 1 & 2
Respasser
Triple Play Series
Turok 1 & 2
U
Ultima Underworld
Ult. Sacred Mac 182
Unreal
Unreal Tournament
Urban Chaos
US Navy Fight Series
V
Vampire
Vigilante
Virtua Fighter
Virtual Springfield
Vines
VR Powerboat Racing
W
War Games Dekon 1
War Gods
Warcraft 1 & 2
Warhammer
Warzone 2100
Wing Commander IV
Wipeout
Wipeout XL
Wolentia 3D
World Cup '98
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WATCHDOG

The software industry can sometimes be a closed shop when it comes to punters and their complaints. Let **PC ZONE** ramraid their premises for you and snatch some answers...

MAN ON A MISSION Adam Phillips

LIVING IN A WORLD O' HURT?

If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing then drop us a line. Please remember that technical issues are not covered by Watchdog – if you've got a techie problem, then write to Dear Wandy (page 132)

WRITE TO Watchdog, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF

EMAIL Alternatively email us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Watchdog'

LOST IN THE JUNGLE.COM?

I I'm writing to tell you of the poor service I have recently received from Jungle.com. I ordered a Gigabyte P2/3 BX ATX 800MHz Dual BIOS 6PCI 1ISA AGP 4DIMM motherboard from them, which had a delivery waiting time of three to five days, but it took three weeks to arrive. Then when I tried to power it up, I got absolutely nothing so I asked my techie mate to take a look.

He also got no response from it even though we had two power packs, as I had bought a new case for my new board to fit into. I rang up Jungle and they suggested that I try it on just foam, because the case may be shorting the motherboard. I tried this and again nothing happened – so I rang them back and got a "returns to base" number.

I returned it asking for a refund. Today, I got a phone call asking to ring them back, which I did. After a 15-minute wait, I got through to a guy called David Fowler who told me that they had tested it with a Pentium 450 and a Pentium 600 – and it had booted up fine. Well, my processor is a PIII 800, so I asked him if he had tested it with this.

He replied that they "did not have the resources" to test it with a PIII 800. He admitted that the fact that they were not testing it with a PIII 800 could be a reason why we were getting different results. However, because it was booting up fine with a P450 and a P600, this was proof that the board was working, and they would not refund my money. So, needing the money, I have asked him to process it through as a non-faulty return which

would give me a refund, minus 15 per cent.

A number of questions arise from this scenario:

1. Why did it take so long for my board to arrive?
2. Why hasn't Jungle.com got the proper resources to test goods which they are selling?
3. Why am I being charged 15 per cent to return my goods?

Lee Hallwood

A Hmm, sounds a tad rough. Off we went to see if Jungle could offer their view on the motherboard dilemma. With regard to the lengthy delivery time, Jungle's CEO Steve Bennett apologised for the delay that you experienced. As for your query about the testing process, he pointed out that "there are so many variations of PCs out there that it is impossible to cater

for every single set-up."

He then went on to explain the issue of the 15 per cent charge: "If a customer sends an item back to us, we test the item before despatching a replacement," says Bennett. "If the goods pass our testing procedures, then the item is returned to the customer. If the customer decides that they no longer want the goods then we charge a 15 per cent restocking fee (this is standard practice in the computer industry). This amount is a contribution to the loss we will make on that item, as we are no longer able to resell the goods as new."

As a one-off gesture of goodwill, though, he says that if you write to him directly, he will make sure that the 15 per cent is returned to you.

CARRY ON CAMERA...

High-tech or not, a warranty exists in principle, rarely in practice – and almost never with obscure brands

I I bought a digital camera from MSquared on March 30 2000. I had it delivered to Finland, where I was working at the time. After a month the camera started playing up randomly: not taking pictures at the set resolution; switching itself on and off; the display screen flickering; and taking much longer than the two seconds (as stated in the manual) to process the photos.

After five weeks, I called MSquared about exchanging it for a credit note. MSquared informed me that AGFA, the manufacturers, would have nothing to do with it, since the warranty for such products was usually only one month. They said they would give me a refund or credit note after it had been checked by their technicians and a fault had been found. Now I know how these things work – there is never a fault when they go in for testing.

Since I was in Finland, I'd have to pay £30 for the postage and £30 return postage if they found no faults. Being a poor student, I couldn't do this without a guarantee of a credit note. I argued that because it was taking more than the two seconds to process the pictures as stipulated in the manual, it was false advertising, so they should take it back.

I was told by the operator that she would consult the customer services manager, then email me. Two weeks passed and no email came, so I called again to be told the same thing. After another two weeks waiting, I called again and got her email address, then sent her an email the same day (June 26) putting our conversation in writing. On July 5, I got my first reply, saying she had passed my email on to customer services and that she'd be chasing it up.

July 17 came and went, so I sent another email wondering why they hadn't been in contact. On July 21, I received an email saying they wouldn't offer me a credit note, and that they had asked AGFA to contact me with regard to my "customer satisfaction with their product".

It has now been three months since I first contacted MSquared about returning the camera. I've also sent AGFA an email and haven't had a reply as of yet.

I'm disgusted that MSquared can treat customers so badly. Please help, as I can't afford to have a £200 piece of junk sitting around collecting dust on my desk.

Simon Kitson

A Watchdog trotted off to MSquared to find out its take on the situation.

They claimed the first correspondence its customer services had with you was on June 26 when you spoke to them and then sent an email confirming your chat on the phone. "I can't confirm whether he contacted us prior to this as there is no record in the customer services department of him doing so," says Karen Holloway, a company spokesperson. She didn't offer an explanation as to why they took so long to get back to you.

In terms of returning faulty goods, MSquared says the procedure is simple: "If the camera is faulty, then Mr Kitson needs to ship the camera back to us, upon receipt of which, we would test for the fault," offers Holloway. "If it's faulty, then we would send the camera for repair under the warranty guidelines. We understand that Mr Kitson would be responsible for the shipping costs, but that is a problem that occurs when you take mechanical items of this nature to another country."

If the only problem you have with the camera is a misrepresentation of specification that AGFA has provided in the manual supplied with the product,



then it's a matter "as we have suggested to Mr Kitson" that he needs to take up with AGFA. "We have supplied him with their email address and telephone numbers," explains Holloway. "Our last correspondence with Mr Kitson was July 27 2000, where he thanked us for AGFA's email addresses, but said that the camera was now functioning fine."

Let us know your thoughts, Simon. In the meantime, Watchdog had a word with Which?Online's Allan Stevens who claims that normally in cases like this, MSquared are still responsible for the product because they sold it to you. So if the camera isn't doing what it should do, as stated in the manual, then it is MSquared's responsibility, not AGFA's, to replace the camera.

UO HORROR!

Q Right, buying online is the way forward apparently – it should be fast, cheap and easy. But definitely not if you buy from Simplygames.com. I ordered a copy of *Ultima Online: Renaissance* from them on June 13 and, more than a month later, it hasn't even been dispatched. Apparently, the game is out of stock and all their customer services department has managed to say is that it will be in shortly – that was on June 22.

Since then, I have emailed them several more times, phoned them and even emailed the managing director who promised to get it to me by Friday of that week – and, unsurprisingly, it hasn't turned up. I don't hold out much hope of getting the game anytime within the next year, but thought that this might warn others against buying from somewhere because it's cheap – get it from a normal shop instead.

Daniel Corwin

A Delayed playing the classic *UO*? Watchdog can almost hear our ed, Chris Anderson, howling in anger at such a tragedy. So, one quick call to Simplygames.com later, and they had this to say: "I was very sorry to hear about the problems Daniel has had and I regret the inconvenience that he has been caused," offers Helen Irvine-Fynn, the company's customer service manager. "We are currently shipping several thousand orders per day, the vast majority of which are delivered within three to five working days. Unfortunately, on very rare occasions, things do go wrong."

She goes on to say that "customer queries are dealt with as a matter of priority at Simplygames.com and I was very concerned to hear that, on this occasion, one of our customers was kept waiting without sufficient information on their order. Although we can't compensate Daniel for the time spent waiting and any inconvenience caused, we have been in touch with him and offered him a free game by way of an apology."

Fair enough... **PCZ**

THOSE ANSWERS...

Yes, it's the answers to the compo we set in the *How To Be A Games Buff* feature. You've demanded to see them, so here they are!

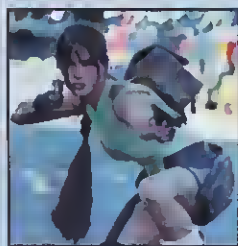
1. In what year was id Software officially founded?
1991

2. What is the name of the programmer who created *Grand Prix* and *Grand Prix 2*?
Geoff Crammond

3. Which was the first commercial game to be distributed as shareware?
Wolfenstein 3D

4. Who directed the *Wing Commander* movie released last year?
Chris Roberts

5. Which game was created by the much on-line maligned Derek Smart?
Battlecruiser 3000AD



6. On which lifestyle/style magazine's cover did Lara Croft first appear?
The Face

7. Which game featured a hidden level in which you had to defend your base from flying, farting cows?
Incoming

8. What was the first God game?
Popubus

9. Which two driving games generated tabloid coverage because of their controversial content?
Grand Theft Auto and Carmageddon

10. Which cop show character was featured in *Driver's* TV commercials?
Huggy Bear from Starsky & Hutch

11. What are the names of the two programmers who created *Elite*?
David Braben and Ian Bell

12. What is the name of the Playstation emulator for the PC?
Bleem

13. Which make and model of car did pro PC games player Dennis Fong win in the Red Annihilation Tournament back in 1997?
Ferrari 328 GTS convertible

14. Which 'interactive movie' starred Margot Kidder (she of *Superman 1 & 2* fame) and the voice of James Earl Jones?
Under A Killing Moon

15. What was the name of the lead character in *Little Big Adventure 1 & 2*?
Twinsen

16. Who is Sierra Online's infamous 'womanising' lounge lizard?
Leisure Suit Larry

17. What does the acronym M.A.M.E stand for?
Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator

18. Which game did Sensible Software never complete or release because of its 'adult content'?
Sex, Drugs And Rock 'n' Roll

19. In which game did the planet of Xen feature?
Half-Life

20. Which was the first game to introduce a moral-based character generation system?
Ultima IV: The Quest Of The Avatar

21. What does GDD stand for?
Gathering Of Developers

22. Who is head honcho of Shiny Entertainment?
Dave Perry

23. Which game features a soundtrack by Cypress Hill?
Kingpin

24. Who was the first model to play the 'real-life' Lara Croft?
Rhona Mitra

25. Which first-person stealth 'em up had a character called Garrett?
Thief: The Dark Project

PCZONE

COMING NEXT ISSUE

MIDTOWN MADNESS 2



We were hoping that *Black & White* was going to be ready, but the perfectionists at Lionhead are still tweaking. Instead, we've managed to secure the exclusive review of *Midtown Madness 2*, the sequel to everyone's favourite driving game. If the demo's ready in time we're going to have that as well, along with a review of the game we've been waiting ages for, *Sudden Strike*. Oh, and maybe *Homeworld Cataclysm* as well. We can but hope.

READ THIS PLEASE!

If you are writing in to complain about a product, whether it be a ropey piece of software or a shoddy PC, please supply us with your full name, address and contact number.

With PCs especially, make sure that you also include all purchasing details such as reference and invoice numbers. It means that we can resolve your problems much quicker.

ON SALE

THURSDAY 19 OCTOBER

WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

Some gamers reveal their innermost secrets, while telling us what's taking up their hard drive space

VENUE Virgin Megastore (Oxford Street) YOUR HOST Martin Korda



CHRISTIANO IVALDI

Software Developer, 25

What's on your hard drive?

"Grand Prix 3 and Diablo II."

Which one do you prefer?

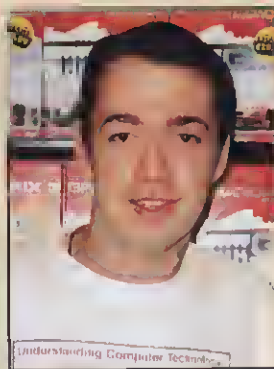
"They're two different types of game, so it's impossible to compare them."

What did you think of GP3?

"It's a good game with some excellent graphics, but in the most part, there's very little that's changed since the last game."

What are you looking forward to playing?

"Falcon 5 if it ever comes out."



ANDREW MARSHALL

Student, 17

What's on your hard drive?

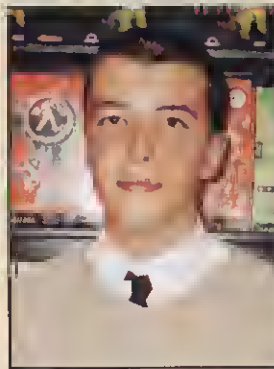
"Baldur's Gate, I love role-playing games."

What's their appeal?

"There's so much depth to them. When you buy an RPG you can be sure that you're going to get your money's worth."

Do you think people can get too lost in their RPG alter egos?

"Not really, people should go for it, especially if they're passionate about it. So long as they're not harming anyone it's fine."



GAVIN THOMAS

Student, 16

What's on your hard drive?

"Champ Manager 3 and Rogue Spear."

What are you looking forward to playing?

"Soldier Of Fortune."

Ever shot a real gun?

"No."

Would you like to?

"Not really."

Not even one of those big ones that spray bullets everywhere?

"Nope."

You're more of a bazooka man.

"No."



MIKE DAVEY

Civil Servant, 35

What's on your hard drive?

"Diablo 2 and Asheron's Call."

Do you play much on the net?

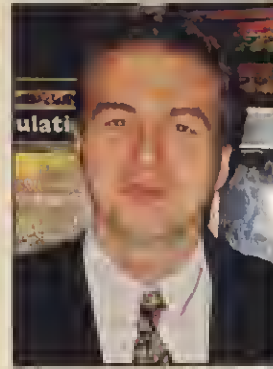
"Yeah, I play Asheron's Call a lot."

Who's the strangest person you've ever met online?

"There are too many to mention. Most of the weird ones are stupid snotty gits, who always spell their names with a 'z' at the end."

What are you looking forward to playing?

"The next generation of online games, especially as online gaming is getting cheaper."



SIMON ALLEN

Actor, 34

What's on your hard drive?

"GP2, Monaco Grand Prix and C&C: Red Alert."

It's an old machine, right?

"It's a P133, but I'm upgrading it."

What are you looking forward to playing?

"GP3."

Do you think F1 races have become a bit boring?

"Sometimes."

How can you improve them?

"Making people walk across the circuit, so the drivers could get points from hitting them."



JESSE THOMAS

Student, 18

What's on your hard drive?

"Soldier Of Fortune. I got the demo off the Internet, and on the strength of that I bought the game."

What are you looking forward to playing?

"Return To Castle Wolfenstein. I love first-person shooters."

In SoF, do you prefer quick kills or toying with your victims?

"I like to toy with my victims. It's great that you can blow their arms off with the shotgun and watch them squirm."

Euuugggh... creepy.



FRED KALINKE

Student, 15

What's on your hard drive?

"Tiberian Sun and Sim City 3000."

Are you a bit of a control freak?

"Yeah, I play Tiberian Sun every night on the Net. I've got a rankenstuit, you know."

You've got a what?

"A rank and stuff."

I thought you said something else. What do you want to do when you finish school?

"Be a liar."

A liar?

"No a lawyer."

It's the same thing, isn't it?



ALEX WALKER

Student, 15

What's on your hard drive?

"Champ Manager 3 and International Cricket Captain."

What are you looking forward to playing?

"I don't know."

Come on give me something to work with here.

"Errr, a new Duke game."

Quake IV? Why?

"Because, although I haven't played the other three, I'm sure the fourth one will be even better."

Now that makes total sense. Next!



JANFRANCO VINNUCI

Software Developer, 23

What's on your hard drive?

"GP3, Superbike 2000, Super 1 Karting and lots of football games."

Why such a huge interest in driving games?

"A few years ago I used to race karts, and I just wanted to relive that experience of speed."

If you had to pick one racing game to take to a desert island, what would it be?

"Probably GP3, but Superbike 2000 would come a pretty close second."



SIMON DEFRIEND

Chartered Accountant, 24

What's on your hard drive?

"Caesar 3, Pharaoh, Age Of Empires I and II, Baldur's Gate and Aliens Vs Predator."

Did you find AvP scary?

"Incredibly scary."

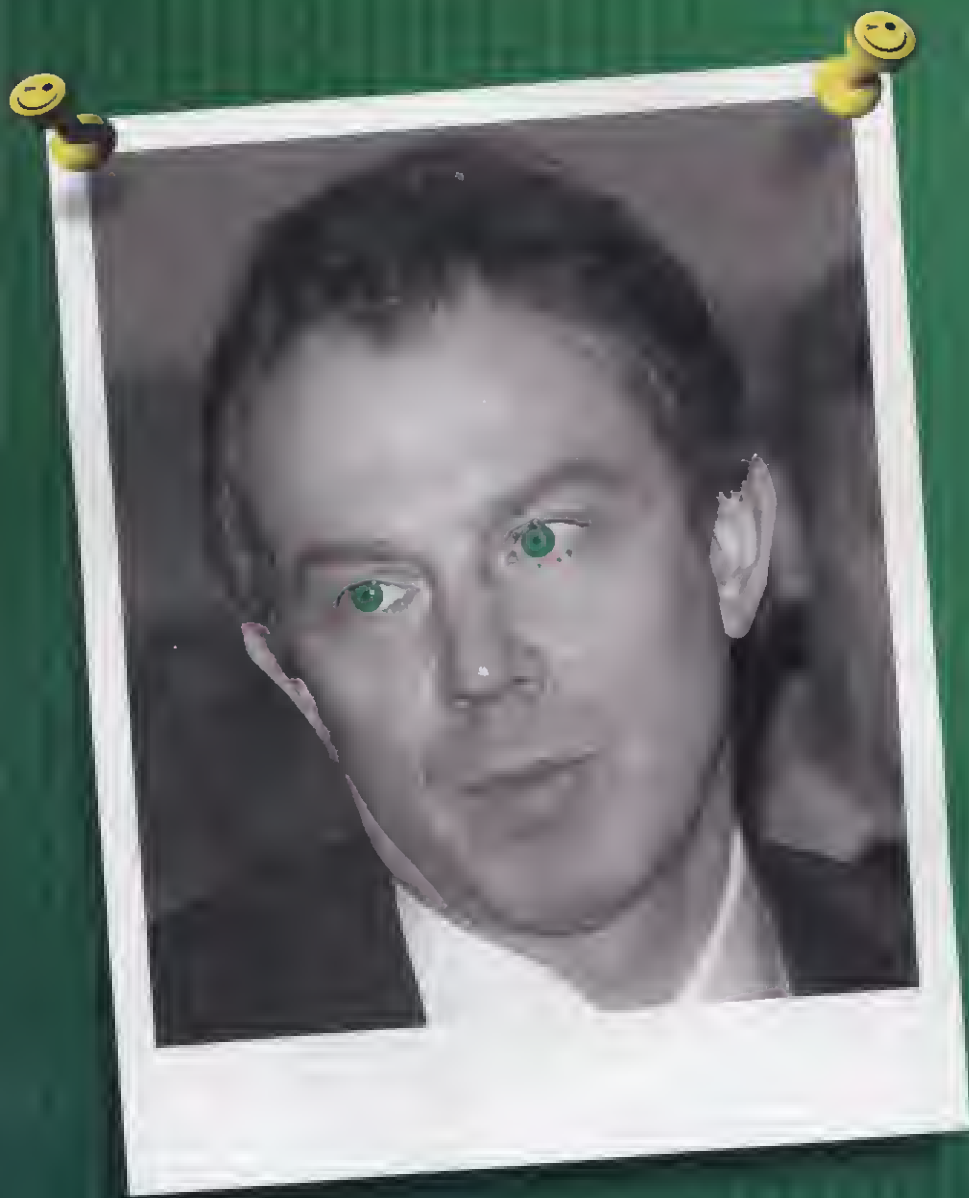
Which character would you play?

"The marine."

Do you find that playing the marine makes it feel more like the films?

"No, it's worse than the films, because at least when you watch them on video you can hide behind the sofa."

Are you an accomplished control freak?



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PCZONE TOP 100

Welcome to the definitive buyers' guide for all discerning PC gamers. The games that grace these pages represent the best titles across all genres. Check here for regular updates

This is the new *PC ZONE* Top 100. Within it you will find the best games you can currently buy for your PC. All the games here deserve a place in our illustrious Top 100 as we go to print, but that could

all change next month when newer titles come in and older games receive new ratings to reflect where they stand in the great scheme of things. Shrewd buyers will always check here first before parting with their money.

BENCHMARK GAME

Benchmark titles are the games that you simply must have if you are a fan of the genre. They are considered by the *PC ZONE* team to be absolute classics and should be bought without hesitation. All new games are compared to their genre's benchmark title when they are reviewed. Bear this in mind before writing into Mailbox

complaining that the latest 3D shooter didn't automatically get 90 per cent: check here first to see what it's up against! Additionally, all games in that genre will receive a new rating every time a new benchmark title comes along.

NEW ENTRY

In the wonderful world of PC gaming, new titles come in every month, some of which are better than the games currently in the Top 100. When this happens, they will gain their rightful place in the Top 100 and lesser titles will drop out to make room for them.

BUDGET

If a game in the Top 100 is available on budget, it will be tagged accordingly. Games that are lower in price than other titles in their genre do not necessarily receive a new score to reflect this. The latest score the game received will still apply – it's up to you to decide whether or not the game is worth buying at its new price point.

Under the *ZONE* scoring system, new games will have to be pretty spectacular to receive this award. They will have to take their genre to unprecedented new heights and represent a major step forward for PC gaming. There are now very few titles that can justifiably be described as *PC ZONE* Classics. This trend will continue across all genres. Generally speaking, all *ZONE* Classics are must-have titles – the benchmark title being the definitive game of the genre – but that does not mean you should discount games that score 80+ per cent. These games receive the *PC ZONE* Award For Excellence and are essential buys if you are a fan of the genre the game fits into. Classics, on the other hand, are games we think will appeal to everyone and will bring new fans to that particular genre. There will not be many of them, but when we say a game is a classic, we *mean* it.



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FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS

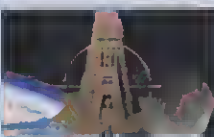
STRATEGY

HALF-LIFE

BENCHMARK
GAME**PCZ #71 • 95%**

✪ Taking the first-person shooter as its starting point, *Half-Life* redefines the genre with an engrossing story, cracking atmosphere and some of the best AI ever coded. *Half-Life* is probably still the best game you can install on your PC, and it's now available with the superb *Opposing Force* add-on in the 'Generations' pack.

PUBLISHER Sierra
• 0118 9209 100

**UNREAL TOURNAMENT****PCZ #81 • 90%**

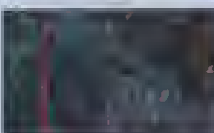
✪ Played over a network or the Internet, *Unreal Tournament* is more than a match for *Quake III*'s multiplayer, with a combination of well-designed maps and diverse gameplay. The single-player mode might be too short, but it's still going to be more than a challenge for most.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

**QUAKE III ARENA****PCZ #87 • 89%**

✪ The biggest brand name in PC gaming is back. The sheer speed, intensity and unrelenting action of *Quake III* make it an essential purchase for all shoot 'em up fans, but sadly the lack of variety prevents it from topping *Unreal Tournament*.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

**STAR TREK: VOYAGER - ELITE FORCE****PCZ #94 84%**

NEWENTRY The first single-player game to use the *Quake III* engine, *Voyager* offers enough thrills to please even the hardest of Trekkie haters. A new scripting system and some clever team fighting by your side, renew faith in an increasingly multiplayer genre.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

**THIEF II: THE METAL AGE****PCZ #88 • 82%**

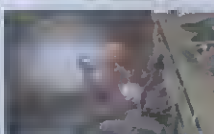
✪ The original *Thief* set new standards in FPS titles with its move away from mindless action towards stealth and its excellent use of light and sound. This sequel delivers more of the same quality gameplay, minus the out-of-place zombie levels.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

**ALIENS VS PREDATOR****PCZ #77 • 81%**

✪ It might not be the best FPS you can buy, but it's definitely the scariest. *Aliens Vs Predator* is also the only game that offers three distinct ways of playing through the game, so if you're looking for a solid single-player blast, this provides excellent value for money.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

**SOLOIER OF FORTUNE****PCZ #89 • 80%**

✪ More like an arcade explosion of unmitigated violence than a FPS in the *Half-Life* mould, *SoF* is a great deal of fun. It's also very sick. If you can stomach amputations and decapitations, then we can guarantee you pure, mindless entertainment.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

**KISS: PSYCHO CIRCUS****PCZ #93 • 78%**

✪ The team of *Daikatana*-defectors have come up with a much better game – using the LithTech engine and basing the levels on songs by Kiss. This is not cutting-edge gaming, but you'll find it is a solid, fun shooter.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

**KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME****PCZ #77 • 77%**

✪ This controversial title should be talked about for its excellent gameplay and graphics rather than its violence and swearing. Because, quite frankly, that side of the game was crap. We still stand by the game, though. It's classic adult entertainment.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

**SHOGO: MOBILE
ARMOUR DIVISION****PCZ #71 • 76%**

✪ Half *Quake* and half *MechWarrior*, this game breathes fresh air into a stale genre. Boasting great graphics and storyline, its only faults are iffy AI and the fact that it's a bit too easy for hardcore *Quake* fans.

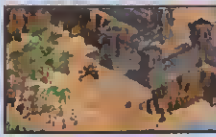
PUBLISHER Microdots • 00 33 1 4601 5401

SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR

BENCHMARK
GAME**PCZ #89 • 93%**

✪ *Shogun* is the first strategy game that has blown us away in a long time. Command enormous armies in epic and bloody battles, send ninjas to assassinate enemy generals and conquer your way through the map of feudal Japan. The 3D engine works beautifully and the in-game options never get in the way of instant playability.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
• 01753 549442

**AGE OF EMPIRES II****PCZ #84 • 89%**

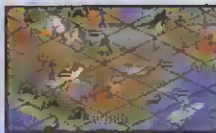
✪ It might not be radically different from the original, but sometimes evolution is just as good as revolution. In *Age II*, the gameplay has been honed to perfection with balanced units and strong single and multiplayer campaigns. Forget the hype of *Tiberian Sun* and opt for this classic RTS.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

**GROUND CONTROL****PCZ #92 • 87%**

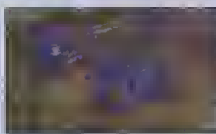
✪ RTSs are increasingly dropping resource management in order to concentrate on strategy. *Ground Control* pulls this off with flair, gorgeous looks and a brilliant camera. If you're after a 3D strategy title but don't fancy samurais, this is the answer.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

**CIVILIZATION II: TEST OF TIME****PCZ #68 • 86%**

✪ A title that lives up to its name, *Civilization II* is probably the oldest game in the Top 100 and it will probably still be around in years to come. Turn-based and in 2D, it offers unlimited replayability and depth. One of the few games that everyone should own.

PUBLISHER Hasbro • 020 8569 1234

**EARTH 2150****PCZ #90 • 84%**

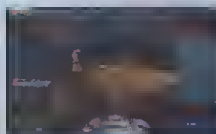
✪ A fantastic 3D engine and great detail team up with sheer playability to make this one of the best RTSs around. Second only to *Shogun* this year, *Earth 2150* is a more traditional strategy title, but it takes the genre even further than it has been before.

PUBLISHER Mattel Interactive • 0144 424 6333

**HOMEWORLD****PCZ #82 • 82%**

✪ *Homeworld* delivers the dream of millions of PC strategists the world over: a fully three-dimensional, strategic experience. The vast expanse of space is the battleground, the hundreds of ships at your command the weapon – and the only limit is your imagination.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

**IMPERIUM GALACTICA II****PCZ #85 • 81%**

✪ Space expansion and empire building have never looked so good. This title boasts the depth of a turn-based strategy game with the immediate action of real-time, plus a great interface and tutorial, which means you'll know your way around in no time.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

**TOTAL ANNIHILATION****PCZ #56 • 80%**

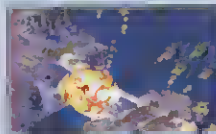
✪ With a ridiculous number of units and unrivalled pace, the original *TA* still stands head and shoulders above more recent efforts. No story to speak of and weak single-player action, but still, for a tenner, no one should be without a copy.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

**THEOCRACY****PCZ #88 • 79%**

✪ Blending the best of *Age of Empires* and *Civilization*, *Theocracy*'s mix of real-time and turn-based gameplay allows you to guide the Aztecs through history and attempt to right the wrongs of the Hispanic conquerors. In short, an unexpected gem.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000

**C&C: TIBERIAN SUN****PCZ #81 • 78%**

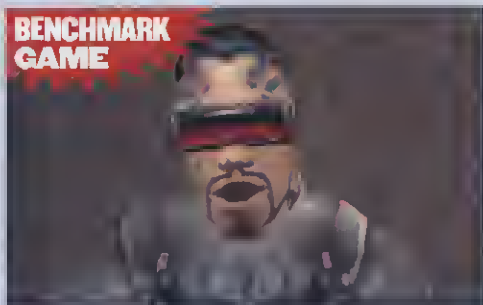
✪ Perhaps not as stunning as one might have hoped after a three-year wait, *Tiberian Sun* is nevertheless a truly great game. Pushing the *Command & Conquer* genre to its limits, it offers PC strategists immense depth, detail and variety.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

DEUS EX

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #93 • 94%

➤ Warren Spector takes the finer elements of *Half-Life*, *System Shock 2* and *Thief* and weaves an RPG of complex beauty that revolutionises computer games. A fascinating sci-fi plot and complete player freedom are just some of the reasons why *Deus Ex* is such a landmark wonder.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive
• 020 8636 3000

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

PCZ #80 • 91%

➤ Definitely one of the most compelling, original and disturbing games to hit the PC, *System Shock 2* manages to successfully mix the genres of role-playing, action and adventure into one. Play it in the house on your own with the lights off to prove how hard you are.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE – REDEMPTION

PCZ #92 • 89%

➤ This amazing RPG is a treat to play. An epic storyline, tactical combat and great acting and music more than make up for the fact that it's a linear hack 'n' slash game at heart.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000

PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

PCZ #87 • 87%

➤ An incredible game from Black Isle, creators of *Baldur's Gate*. It's a dark, adult scorch of an RPG. Moreover, the character development is the best we've seen in any game of its kind and the story is compelling, with well-scripted dialogue.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

BALDUR'S GATE

PCZ #73 • 80%

➤ With every developer going 3D these days, it's refreshing to find an old-school RPG that combines traditional D&D role-playing with sumptuous 2D graphics. In a nutshell, *Baldur's Gate* is intelligent and involving in equal measures.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

FINAL FANTASY VII

PCZ #66 • 80%

➤ Despite the recent release of *FFVIII*, we still rate this earlier episode in the series above it. The story is better, there are more subgames and the whole thing is more involving, especially if you like Japanese-style cartoony graphics. And it should be out on budget soon.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000

FALLOUT 2

PCZ #71 • 79%

➤ Does exactly what it says on the tin. Twice as big as the original, but utilising the exact same engine. If you liked the first game, you'll love this – not twice as much, but certainly for twice as long. A real life-sapper and one of the best RPGs money can buy.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

ICEWIND DALE

PCZ #93 • 75%

➤ Despite the introduction of larger enemies, *Icwind Dale* is little more than an add-on pack for *Baldur's Gate*. It looks the same and it plays the same, which isn't surprising since it's made by the same people. Very good, but we'll wait for *BG2*.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

DIABLO II

PCZ #93 • 72%

➤ Blizzard might have repackaged the original *Diablo* and produced an even bigger version with the same graphics and gameplay, but its fans aren't complaining. It's already one of the hottest and biggest-selling games ever.

PUBLISHER Havas Interactive • 0118 920 9100

ODIUM

PCZ #87 • 70%

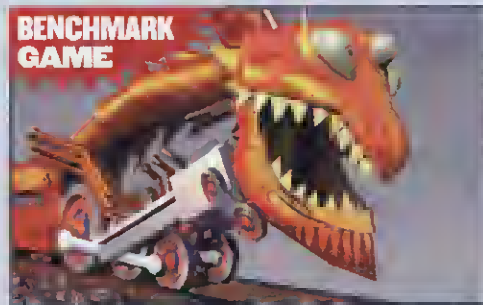
➤ Imagine an RPG in the style of *Final Fantasy* with battle sequences à la *X-COM* and you'll have a pretty good idea of what *Odium* is like. The story is set in a European city populated by UN soldiers and a variety of monsters. In short, it's curiously compelling and it will keep you hooked for a while.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000

ACTION/ADVENTURES

GRIM FANDANGO

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #71 • 88%

➤ If you've followed the successes of LucasArts from the early days of *Monkey Island*, *Sam & Max* and *Day Of The Tentacle*, this is a must-buy. Sublime graphics and genuine humour ensure it's a classic of its genre. A word of warning: it's bloody hard and, if your mind doesn't work laterally, you'll be playing it until the day you die.

PUBLISHER LucasArts
• 020 7368 2255

DISCWORLD NOIR

PCZ #79 • 87%

➤ Although the point-and-click adventure genre is dying, *Discworld Noir* is very much alive. It's darker in style than previous *Discworld* games and is all the better for it in our opinion, particularly if you're not a fan of Terry Pratchett's zany, off-the-wall humour. Don't miss it.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

THE NOMAD SOUL

PCZ #83 • 86%

➤ Distinctly odd, but original, *The Nomad Soul* is a huge, intricate world populated by lap-dancers and David Bowie. At turns adventure, beat 'em up and platformer, it's insanely ambitious and almost manages to pull it off.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

INDIANA JIMES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

PCZ #84 • 86%

➤ LucasArts moves away from the point-and-click genre and into *Tomb Raider* territory for its latest *Indy*, with the adventure elements still in place.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000

MESSIAH

PCZ #85 • 82%

➤ Shiny's wonderful shooter features a chubby cherub, but also a bunch of whores and lots of gratuitous swearing. As Bob, under-age agent of God, you must possess people's bodies and, like a good and typically hypocritical Christian, kill everything that gets in your way.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS

PCZ #94 81%

NEWENTRY Not a vast improvement on its predecessor, but unlike most PS conversions, you can pump up the resolution as high as you want it. The usual array of zombies are joined by more special monsters and it keeps the George Romero spirit alive – or dead.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

NOCTURNE

PCZ #84 • 80%

➤ Why would you pay good money to be scared? Because it's damn good fun, and if you find the average PC game laughable, we dare you to sit through *Nocturne* with your curtains drawn. It's a beautiful exercise in computer-generated fear.

PUBLISHER Take 2 • 01753 722900

MONKEY ISLAND 8DUNTY PACK

PCZ #74 • 80%

➤ *Monkey Island 1* and *2* are perhaps the finest point-and-clickers ever to grace the PC. The third outing may have been disappointing, but it would be a sin to exclude it from this excellent triple pack.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 4567000

TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

PCZ #83 • 79%

➤ Lara's back in her fourth and best adventure so far. More moves, better looks, intricate puzzles and a well-developed plot. It's not going to win over the cynics, but it's still a damn fine game.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000

SAM & MAX AND OAY OF THE TENTACLE

NOT REVIEWED • 78%

➤ Two of the finest adventure games in the world are now available in a single pack for a bargain price. They still match most titles that are released today, so go and buy them now.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 4567000



RACING GAMES

MIDTOWN MADNESS

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #79 • 88%

Jump in your car and drive around Chicago participating in races, annoying the police, or just cruising around. Not quite *Grand Theft Auto 3D*, but just as much fun. This is definitely the best all-out arcade racer you can currently buy on the PC. And that is exactly why it raced into pole position in our driving supertest ahead of everything else.

PUBLISHER Microsoft
• 0345 002000

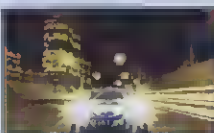


COLIN MCRAE RALLY

PCZ #68 • 85%

Sporting an updated *TOCA* engine, *Colin McRae* is still the benchmark in rally simulations. It boasts realistic handling, car customisation and stacks of multiplayer options, which all contribute to keeping it well ahead of its rivals. It's now available as a budget title, which makes it an absolute steal.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



LE MANS 24 HOURS

PCZ #87 • 82%

Although not quite as challenging as the race it's based on, *Le Mans 24 Hours* is a driving game for skillful players who know their brakes from their elbows. You can even get involved in a rewarding career mode culminating in the famous race itself.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 7738 8199



GRAND PRIX 3

PCZ #94 80%

NEW ENTRY This F1 title displays all the customary Crammond perfectionism. The detail is amazing, which makes it all the more puzzling as to why there is no team work. Don't expect much more than a 3D accelerated *GP2* but, if that's what you're after, you'll love it.

PUBLISHER Hasbro Interactive • 020 8569 1234



NEED FOR SPEED PORSCHE 2000

PCZ #90 • 80%

Not as good as hooking up with your mates at the arcade, but still a damn good conversion of a damn fine game. Forget realism and concentrate on flinging your car around the track as fast as you can. Who needs depth when racing is this exciting?

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



RALLY MASTERS

PCZ #89 • 80%

Rally games tend to blend into one another quite seamlessly. After all, the cars look exactly the same and they go round the same tracks. *Rally Masters*, however, offers the all-important feel of a great driving game together with loads of options and some tasty graphics.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 7738 8199



TOCA 2

PCZ #76 • 80%

Predictably, Codemasters has gone and done it again. More cars, more tracks and the same stunning attention to detail make *TOCA 2* an essential purchase for petrolheads. Graphically, it may not be a massive improvement, but gameplay-wise it definitely is.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

PCZ #84 • 80%

Close, but no *McRae*. That was the verdict from the boy Hill on this new racer. It looks fantastic and the on-screen Ordnance Survey map is a nice touch, but it's let down by some poor camera angles and unnecessarily solid obstacles. Ouch.

PUBLISHER Actualise • 01625 855015

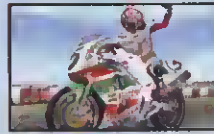


MOTOCROSS MADNESS 2

PCZ #92 • 80%

More mad two-wheeled antics in a sequel that doesn't improve on the original, apart from the graphical update. It's still fun and far removed from reality, but you might want to track down the first one in the bargain bin.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



SUPERBIKE 2000

PCZ #88 • 78%

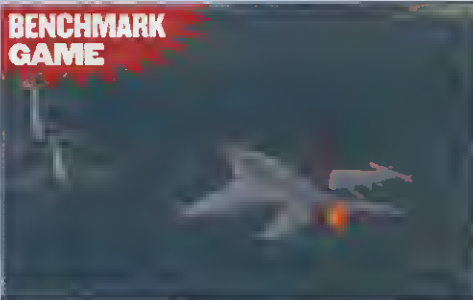
The best motorcycling sim on the PC, this game sports incredible visuals, slick handling and astonishing detail. But it's too easy to fall off unless you use computer-assisted help. However, for pure two-wheeled action, *Motocross Madness* is still the best option.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

FLIGHT SIMULATORS

FALCON 4

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #72 • 89%

We waited patiently for years for this title to arrive, and the good news is that, for once, we weren't disappointed. *Falcon 4* sports beautiful 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure that leaves the competition standing. If you're going to buy one flight sim, make it this one – we guarantee that you won't be disappointed.

PUBLISHER MicroProse
• 01454 893893

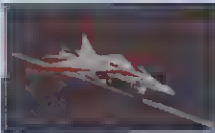


F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR

PCZ #68 • 87%

This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece may seem a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you who are looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this title.

PUBLISHER Ocean/DID • 0161 832 6633

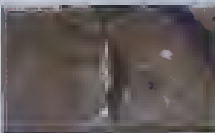


F/A-18E SUPER HORNET

PCZ #83 • 86%

If you like your flight sims to be realistic with a great big capital 'R', look no further. In fact, this game is so life-like that the US navy has adopted it for promotional work and ground-based familiarity training. But make sure you watch out for friendly fire.

PUBLISHER Titus Software • 01926 335 5400

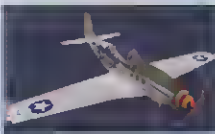


MIG ALLEY

PCZ #80 • 86%

Mig Alley gives hardcore flight simmers' piloting skills a run for their money, but don't let that put you off. If you're willing to put in the work, this title will repay you with a wealth of excellent in-flight graphics and a selection of brilliant mission-planning elements.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 020 8343 7337



FLIGHT UNLIMITED III

PCZ #82 • 85%

For all those sim aficionados who enjoy the experience of flying for its own sake rather than as a lame excuse for blasting other flying things to bits, this (along with the *Flight Sim* series) is an object of worship and devotion. It certainly deserves high praise.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



FLANKER 2.0

PCZ #85 • 84%

Hardcore pilots with a taste for Yankee blood need look no further. Extremely hard to fly, but very rewarding nevertheless, *Flanker 2.0* recreates the real thing in minute detail. However, be warned: hours of practice are needed before you can go off shooting stuff.

PUBLISHER SSI • 01293 651300



ENEMY ENGAGED: COMANCHE HDKUM

PCZ #89 • 84%

The latest helicopter sim to hit the shelves, it is also the best one to date. In no other game do you feel the excitement of being involved in a real war, largely due to an excellent dynamic campaign mode.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 020 8343 7337



JANE'S USAF

PCZ #88 • 82%

USAF offers playability that allows non-hardcore flyers to have a successful spin. While this means that the standards of realism are nowhere near other titles, it fills the gap for those of us who don't care about such things. This is a great flight sim that anybody can enjoy.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



JANE'S F/A-18

PCZ #89 • 82%

Another game based on the US Navy's Super Hornet, this is an incredibly detailed jet sim that suffers slightly from being too hard for beginners. Graphically, it's up there with the best and the interface makes you feel as close to the real thing as is possible on a desktop.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



TEAM ALLIGATOR

PCZ #85 • 80%

Helicopter sims are rare but when they do appear on the scene they are usually superb. Although *Team Alligator* doesn't quite surpass the cheaper *Apache Havoc*, it has truly beautiful graphics and feels great to fly. Without doubt, the best Russian chopper sim around.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

SPORTS

FIFA 2000

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #84 • 86%

★ The FIFA franchise has been rolling on for years and it gets better each time. Although it missed a Classic rating by a whisker, *FIFA 2000* is still the best conversion of the finest sport known to man. You should be able to find it on budget soon. Or you could always tork out the full price for the recent *Euro 2000*, which is essentially the same game.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
• 01753 549442



SUPREME SNOWBOARDING

PCZ #85 • 85%

★ Snowboarding is not a sport you'd expect to captivate a PC audience, but this game gives as exhilarating an experience as you could hope for without breaking a leg. Oh, and all the streetwise attitude you'd expect is here, of course.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 8738 8199



PGA CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF 2000

PCZ #92 • 84%

★ It's really not that much different from last year's groundbreaking title, but this *Championship Golf 2000* edition has enough subtle tweaks to make it a worthy purchase if you loved its predecessor. It also has the best control system we've ever seen in what is definitely the best golf game available.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



NBA LIVE 2000

PCZ #85 • 82%

★ As slick as always, but what makes the 2K edition special is the inclusion of teams from the 50s onwards, comedy haircuts and the works. Although not quite as immediate as *Inside Drive*, it's a more complete simulation of the sport all round.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



OPEN TENNIS 2000

PCZ #92 • 81%

★ Not since *Super Tennis* on the SNES have we had so much fun hitting a ball back and forth over a net. After some initial reluctance, the whole office stopped fragging and started lobbing. Incredibly playable and unsurpassed in multiplayer.

PUBLISHER Cryo • 0121 250 5070



NBA: INSIDE DRIVE

PCZ #82 • 80%

★ While not exactly the most popular sport in this country, *Inside Drive* manages to suck you in with its supreme playability. Its presentation is not quite up to EA standards, but what is? But when the gameplay is this good, who cares.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000



VIRTUAL POOL 2

PCZ #58 • 79%

★ Shading *Jimmy White's Cueball 2* as the best game with balls on a table, *VP2* is much better than its predecessor. 3dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules makes it a more essential purchase than before.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



JIMMY WHITE'S CUEBALL 2

PCZ #68 • 78%

★ The finest snooker simulation on the PC. Chalk your cue and take on the PC or your mates and, when you're tired of the baize, you can move round and have a go on the fully-featured darts board instead. Saves going down the Working Men's Club.

PUBLISHER Virgin Interactive • 020 7368 2255



ACTUA SOCCER 3

PCZ #72 • 72%

★ If you can't get on with *FIFA*, then *Actua* is the second port of call for footy fans. It plays a faster game and there's a good range of options and a huge number of teams to play against, which goes a long way to helping maintain its shelf life.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601



MILLENNIUM GAMES

PCZ #93 • 65%

★ Everyone remembers the good old days of Daley Thompson's joystick-wagging *Decathlon*. Sergei Bubka might not have the same pedigree, but this athletics simulation is a quite a laugh and good fun nonetheless.

PUBLISHER Midas • 01782 633500

SPACE COMBAT

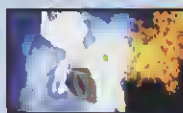
X - BEYOND THE FRONTIER

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #82 • 87%

★ The spirit of *Elite* lives on in this massive trading epic from Germany, in which you must buy and fight your way back home to Earth. The combat side of the gameplay may not be the best on offer, but with goods to trade and races to discover, it rewards patience with variety and months of play. This title is deeply hypnotic and beautiful, rather than tense and frenetic.

PUBLISHER THQ • 01483 767656



TERMINUS

PCZ #93 • 86%

★ Who says the days of independent bedroom programming are over? *Terminus* proves you can make a great game on your own if you have the talent and the passion. It just edges out *FreeSpace 2*.

PUBLISHER Vicarious Visions • www.vvisions.com



FREESPACE 2

PCZ #84 • 85%

★ Completely different from *X*, *FreeSpace 2* offers fast-paced dogfighting action all the way. It boasts a superb interface, epic story and amazing graphics, but it's a bit short-lived if you don't play online.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 020 7551 4222



X-WING: ALLIANCE

PCZ #77 • 81%

★ At last! Fly the Millennium Falcon in the final episode of the long-running *X-Wing* series. Certainly the best-looking *X-Wing* game to date, *Alliance* is slow at first, but boy does it pick up later on.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



STARLANCER

PCZ #91 • 80%

★ While *Starlancer* doesn't do anything startlingly new, it is a highly polished affair with compulsive gameplay and gorgeous visuals. A must for space sim fans.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000

MANAGEMENT

CM 99/2000

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #84 • 92%

★ This is more than just a game, it's a way of life, according to the fans of the best football management game in existence. If you dare to play it, you can forget about your social life and expect to spend hours every day poring over unknown players in a bid to discover the next Ronaldo. The word 'benchmark' doesn't really describe how much better than the competition this game is.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



THE SIMS

PCZ #87 • 85%

★ This game offers a staggering amount of possibilities. Essentially, you create your own person, or family, and guide them through the ups and downs of life. It's the definitive docu-soap and makes for compelling gameplay.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



CAESAR III

PCZ #70 • 84%

★ Starting from scratch, you've got to build a majestic Roman city and ensure a harmonious life for your citizens. So what? So it's utterly absorbing and probably the most addictive god sim in existence.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

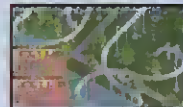


SIMCITY 3000

PCZ #74 • 83%

★ Ten years on, *SimCity* remains as addictive as it ever was. Little was broken, and little was fixed. With new buildings to try out and an enhanced transport system, *SimCity 3000* is a must for old-timers and new addicts alike.

PUBLISHER Maxis/EA • 01753 549442



ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

PCZ #75 • 82%

★ Pack out your own theme park with the most fiendish rides your imagination can conjure up. From rickety wooden clippers to *Nemesis* style, white-knuckle gumers, *RT* is hugely addictive.

PUBLISHER Hasbro Interactive • 020 8569 1234

Buy on-line www.jakarta.co.uk

ONLINE ONLY

EVERQUEST: THE RUINS OF KUNARK



PCZ #92 • 90%

✦ The combat-oriented online RPG of choice just got a whole lot better with this expansion pack. Chris Anderson has spent months casting spells with hundreds of other people and never stops talking about it, so there must be something special going on. *Ruins Of Kunark* doesn't really offer any radical changes, but in this case bigger really is better.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000

ALLECIANCE

PCZ #91 • 82%

✦ The first true online only space combat sim, *Allegiance* is a complex yet rewarding beast. Now you can fly around with hundreds of others, co-ordinating strategies and establishing chains of command.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000

ASHERON'S CALL

PCZ #88 • 76%

✦ The graphics and freedom to do almost anything make this title a commendable addition to the genre. But, as in real life, it's a great tragedy you can't kill other humans as most of the ones you meet deserve a good kicking.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000

ULTIMA ONLINE: RENAISSANCE

PCZ #92 • 75%

✦ It's been at the top for a while, but now that the sequel is on the way the original looks dated. *Renaissance* isn't enough of an improvement for it to compete with *EverQuest* – online RPGs are moving on.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

PLANETARIUM

PCZ #94 72%

NEW ENTRY Available free from the Net, *Planetarium* is the work of three out-of-work Norwegians. A turn-based sci-fi strategy game with minimal graphics, it still manages to absorb you with its playability.

PUBLISHER Planetarium • www.planetarium.com

3D ACTION/STRATEGY

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS



PCZ #79 • 90%

✦ You don't get a second chance in a real war, and *Hidden & Dangerous* is the game that comes closest to putting you in the middle of hell on earth. From the first mission it grabs you by the balls and doesn't let up until you're dead, with a bullet in the head. As a strategic shoot 'em up, games don't get any harder, or more compelling and atmospheric.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

SWAT 3

PCZ #85 • 87%

✦ Artificial intelligence doesn't get any better than this. Add some truly spectacular graphics, an ingenious command interface and edge-of-your-seat gameplay, and you've got a top title.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

ROGUE SPEAR

PCZ #84 • 84%

✦ We loved *Rainbow Six*, and although this follow-up can't match *Hidden & Dangerous* for intensity, it's a superb romp through the world of terrorism. Pick your team, kit them out and plan your missions carefully.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

BATTLEZONE 2

PCZ #84 • 84%

✦ Stunning graphics and a winning blend of strategy and first-person action in this sequel to the highly acclaimed *Battlezone*. The fight for world domination has never looked so good.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

SPEC OPS 2

PCZ #84 • 80%

✦ Challenging *Hidden & Dangerous* for the top spot, *Spec Ops 2* puts you in charge of a four-man green beret squad intent on staying alive and shooting the enemy in the head. It's incredibly realistic, with top-notch sound.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

PCZONE ALL-TIME CLASSICS



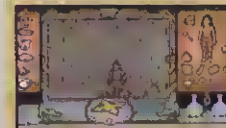
DOOM

✦ This is the game that needs no introduction. Without *Doom* we wouldn't have had *Quake*, *Unreal Tournament* or *Half-Life*. Every time you play a first-person shooter you should take five minutes to pay homage to the game that changed the world as we know it. *Doom*, we thank you.



ULTIMA VII

✦ Still the best of all the *Ultima* games, and probably the finest RPG ever seen on a PC. The graphics might be old-hat, but the gameplay certainly isn't. *Ultima VII* blends exploration and character interaction, and it's the last title in the *Ultima* series to give complete party control.



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD

✦ We reviewed this game back in the first issue of *PC ZONE*. It was a landmark RPG then and it's still a landmark RPG now, although the graphics obviously look a bit tired and dated. Do we think it's the best RPG ever? Almost, but not quite. Cast your eyes up the mag a couple of inches for the answer to that question.



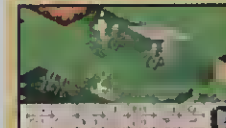
DUNE II

✦ If you know your strategy, you'll know that *Dune II* is the game that's done more than any of its rivals to define the genre as we know it today. The 2000 update was disappointing, but only because it didn't add anything new. The fact that it still plays better than many new titles is testament to its staying power.



SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER

✦ EA's *FIFA* series might look the part, but we're convinced that *Sensible Soccer* was and is the ultimate example of gameplay over presentation. With its famous top-down view, *Sensible* offers fast frantic action that does more to replicate the real-life game than any of its predecessors.



UFO: ENEMY UNKNOWN

✦ This game came out of nowhere and took the world by storm. Compelling strategy, tense turn-based battles and a myriad of research options made this the most addictive game ever upon its arrival. Subsequent sequels were just as addictive, but this is the game that originally captured our hearts.



MAGIC CARPET

✦ Drawing gasps of amazement from everyone who saw it, Bullfrog's *Magic Carpet* was one of the most original and inventive games to be released in the early days of 3D. So original, in fact, that it never got the recognition it deserved. We still think the blend of action and strategy was spot-on.



WING COMMANDER

✦ The original space combat game spawned the first big-budget PC series. In fact, the *Wing Commander* series was so hugely successful that they went and made a film. Inevitably, this was absolute rubbish and the public stayed away in their millions. Will these people ever learn?



TOMB RAIDER

✦ She might be getting a bit rusty round the gills, but when Lara first bounced onto the small screen, we fell in love with her instantly. 3D action adventure games haven't been the same since and at the time nothing could touch it. Do you remember your first encounter with the T-Rex?



CIVILIZATION

✦ The original and some say the best turn-based strategy game. When *Civilization* first appeared, it was hailed correctly as the first game that changed and evolved depending on how you played it. Recent versions have presented more of the same, but in this case that is definitely no bad thing.

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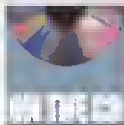
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calling the helpline, please take
note of the following points

- ★ If possible, have your PC operating
and near the phone when you call.
- ★ If this is not possible, note down all
relevant information – ie system type,
sound card, RAM and so on – plus the
nature of the fault.
- ★ Make sure you have a pen and paper
to hand when you call so you can jot
down the relevant info.

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

- ★ You need at least a Pentium
166 with 32Mb RAM to run the
software on this month's CD-ROM.
- ★ Many of the programs on our
cover CD-ROM are designed to run
under Windows 95/98 and, as a
result, some of them may require
a Pentium 233 with 64Mb RAM to
run satisfactorily. Please note that
some games also require a 3D
accelerator card to run.
- ★ Use the browser and menu
system to see which demos are
3D-accelerator only.



DEMOS

AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE CONQUERORS

Microsoft



That's a bad kitty.

EXCLUSIVE

What with *AOEII* being nearly a year old now, it's likely that many of you are a bit bored of the campaigns that it came with. If you're anything like us lot, you'll probably be jumping up and down in frenzied excitement at the prospect of playing some new campaigns, and on this month's CD we're giving you an exclusive demo of Microsoft's add-on pack, *The Conquerors*.

There are two ways to play. The single-player option allows you to try out a campaign based around the conquest of the Aztec nation. Bearing more than a passing resemblance to *Theocracy*, you must gain supremacy of the land and fend off the invaders. However, your task is made all the more difficult by the fact that your weapons and technology are far inferior to those of the colonisers. Subsequently, you'll need to be at your strategic best if you're to have any chance of success, even on the easiest of the three difficulty settings.

The second choice you have is to play with other people. The multiplayer option provides a *King Of The Hill* map called Yucatan which should test you and your friends to the limits. As ever, you'll have to collect resources and hunt for food to make sure your nation can grow and prosper.

Hardcore *Age Of Empires* fans should have hours of fun with this demo but if for some reason you haven't played the full game yet, then this is an excellent place for you to start.

Controls: Mouse



"You bloody Aztecs. Coming over here, stealing our women, taking our jobs..."



The brothel was in dire need of some net curtains.



"Anyone need a light?"



An attempt to inject humour into the game. Oh dear.



Fancy meeting you here.

BLAIR WITCH VOLUME ONE: THE RUSTIN PARR INVESTIGATION

Take 2

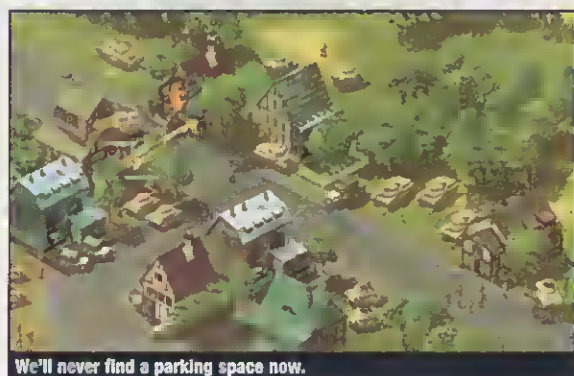
After the success of last year's *The Blair Witch Project*, it was only going to be only a matter of time before we saw some gaming spin-offs. On our CD is the demo of the first of a number of games which will carry the *Blair Witch* title, *Blair Witch Volume One: The Rustin Parr Investigation*. Using the excellent Nocturne engine to full effect, this third-person action/adventure will have you on the edge of your seat from start to finish.

The graphics are first class and the eerie sound effects add to the all-round atmosphere. It really is a case of spare underpants at the ready. The demo comes with two different settings, Teen and Mature, with the latter obviously providing more scary and explicit features.

At the start you find yourself in some woods, armed with nothing but your wits and held back only by your

tear. Almost straight away, you'll be chased by a nearly invisible creature, and keeping out of its way is highly recommended if you want to survive for more than a few minutes. If you manage to shake it off, then waste no time exploring your surroundings, and discover all that you can about the mystery that is the *Blair Witch* legend.

Controls: Mouse and keyboard



We'll never find a parking space now.

SUDDEN STRIKE

COV

Back in *PCZ* #90, we brought you the fantastic *Sudden Strike* demo. As the game nears completion, here's a chance for you to sample the multiplayer side of things before the full version hits the shops. You'll find that playing with friends, as always, throws up loads of new challenges as they make unpredictable moves and struggle to keep control over all their forces. We've been playing it in the office and we guarantee that once the action starts, you'll find that few other RTS games are as realistic or as entertaining as this one.

Controls: Keyboard and mouse

Scouting plays a major role in *Star Trek New Worlds*.

Defend the Taubat at all costs.

STAR TREK NEW WORLDS

Interplay

We've already had a *Star Wars* 3D RTS game, so its hardly surprising that someone (namely Interplay) has gone and made a *Star Trek* one, and a damn fine effort it is as well. This demo provides the perfect grounding for any potential commanders, providing an in-depth tutorial which takes you through every aspect of the game.

You'll learn how to construct bases, mine resources, balance power and most importantly of all, how to attack the enemy and defend yourself from their onslaughts.

Once you've mastered the skills required to guide your troops on the battlefield, you're thrown into a mission, in which you must defend a technologically advanced race called the Taubat from Klingon and Romulan attacks. While the battle rages, you must also scout round the map and find the three devices that the Taubat are looking for, and once you've found them, scan the city to unveil why the items are so important to the Taubat.

With action from the outset, you'll need to be on your guard straight away. Several skirmishes will start

on different parts of the map, so divide your troops wisely and make sure that you keep track of all your forces. If you've played the tutorial, and let's face it, most of you probably haven't bothered, you should be familiar enough with the controls to be able to win this mission after a couple of attempts. If, however, you've just waded straight in, you'll soon find that you've got a real challenge on your hands, as your disorganised forces get wiped out in virtually no time at all. Either way, good luck.

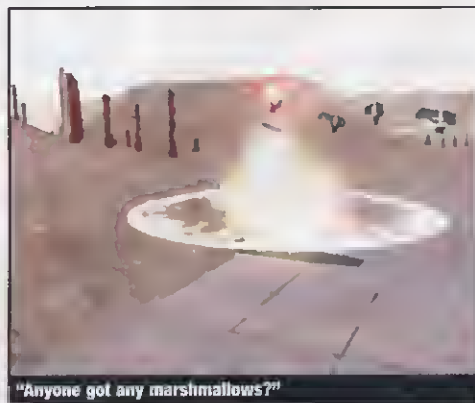
Controls: Mouse



Vinny's eighth driving test failure was also his last.



Battles can get extremely intense.



"Anyone got any marshmallows?"

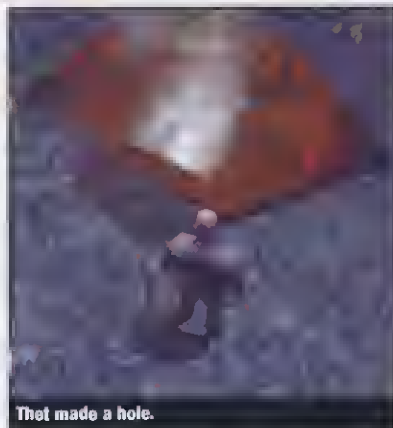
DEEP SPACE NINE: THE FALLEN

Infogrames

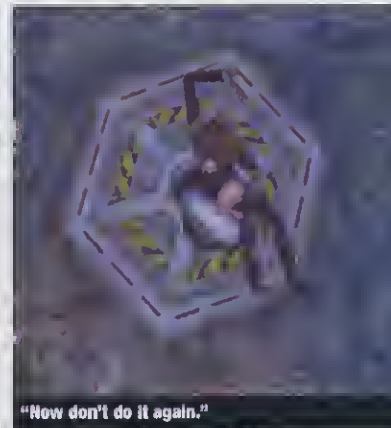
Hot on the heels of Activision's *Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force* comes Infogrames' third-person action adventure *Deep Space Nine: The Fallen*. You play Captain Benjamin L. Sisko (the captain of Deep Space Nine for those of you who don't know), who is sent down to the surface of a planet, to investigate a crash site.

Once there you must locate some distress beacons and search for any survivors, rendezvousing at the crash site once you've completed your objectives. What at first looks to be a standard search-and-rescue mission soon turns into a total nightmare as firstly your crew mate gets crushed to death and then flesh-eating creatures start trying to devour you alive. You can't even get away with being a cowardly wuss who runs away, as these things can run faster than you. Still, you could always try the old moralistic Jean-Luc Picard spiel and try talking them out of eating you, although we suggest you don't pin your hopes on this tactic working all that often, as it's completely crap. Fighting the monsters is a lot more fun and if you make it to the end, you'll not only be harder than Arnold Schwarzenegger's right bicep, you'll also want to buy the full game once it finally appears on the shelves.

Controls: Mouse and keyboard



That made a hole.



"Now don't do it again."



Take control of your very own transport system.

← TRAFFIC GIANT

Infogrames

Here's one for all you trainspotters out there. Take control of a city's transport system and manage it according to the needs of the commuters. You can manipulate the roads, buses, trams and trains so that gridlock and delays become a thing of the past. Sounds easy right? You wish. This is a deeply engrossing game and while it's not the most interesting concept in the world, you'll find that you're soon addicted to it. Just don't tell your friends, OK?

Controls: Mouse

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

Activision

Skateboarding that is, not prancing around on ice. You think this demo's going to be totally rubbish (unless you like wearing your cap back to front, bending your knees stupidly while saying duuuuuuuuude), but it's actually loads of fun. OK, the surfer-rock track in the background will start to piss you off after you've heard it a couple of times, but you'll soon teach yourself to ignore it as you try to get to grips with impressive skateboarding stunts which will notch up your score and impress anyone who might be watching at the time.

Controls: Keyboard or gamepad

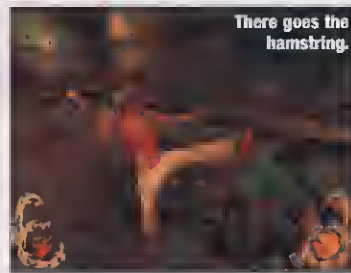


ARABIAN NIGHTS

Visiware

When we first saw *Arabian Nights*, we were convinced that it was *Prince Of Persia 3D*, but after playing the demo for a while we realized that it was actually a whole lot better. After an alluring intro, which if you're male you'll be loath to skip even on the 20th viewing, you're thrust straight into the action. Armed with your fists, a sword and some magic, you must battle your way through the level, fending off evil monsters, vile creatures and big-busted women as you go, as well as navigating the obstacles and traps that stand in your way. If you get stuck and feel like giving up then just load up the intro again and see what's waiting for you should you succeed. Go on, give it a go, you know you want to.

Controls: Mouse and keyboard



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PATCHES

The latest updates for some of your favourite games

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Nox 1.2 Patch and Quest
Submarine Titans
Terminus 1.1 to 1.7
Teminus 1.62 to 1.7 Patch
Unreal Tournament 428

EXTENDED PLAY

Turn to page 153 where Tony Lamb will tell you all about this month's selection of add-ons, mods and maps.



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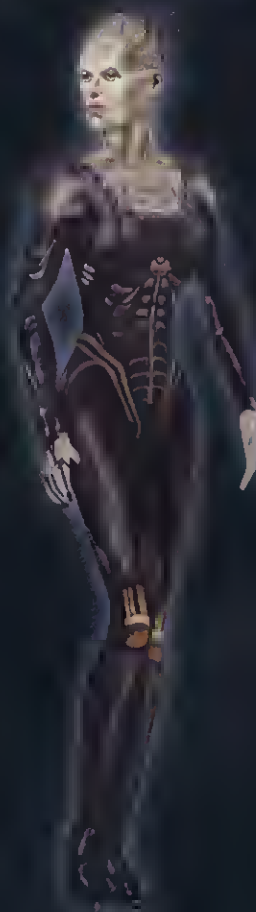
STAR TREK VOYAGER ELITE FORCE



Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force transports you into the Voyager universe by way of ID Software's powerful Quake III Arena engine. Elite Force pits the player against a variety of enemies and species that are immediately recognisable to Star Trek fans, including the ruthless and emotionless Borg and 14 other different enemies.

You take the role of either Alexander or Alexandria Munro: members of the elite force of security personnel named the Hazard Team. During the game you get the chance to meet and interact with characters from the TV series - some may even accompany you on away missions.

Battle your way through 8 missions which will take you from the environs of the Voyager spaceship - recreated over 8 levels with every major room on the ship included - to alien ships and space stations. To help your progress through the game, there are 8 weapons to choose from with each having alternate fire functions. Great fun in single or multiplayer mode!



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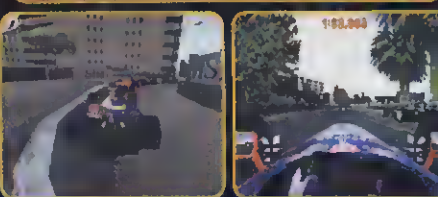
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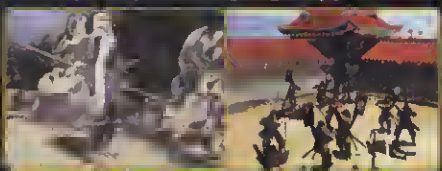
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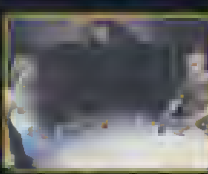


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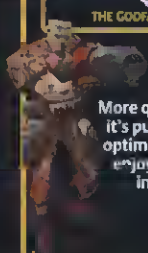


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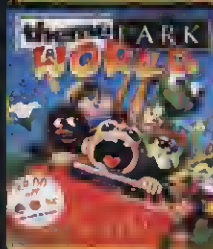


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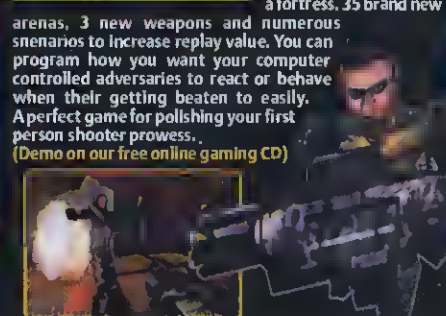


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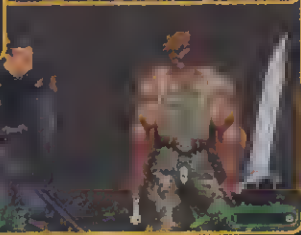
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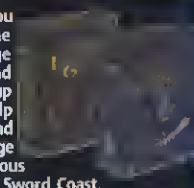
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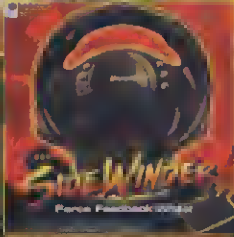
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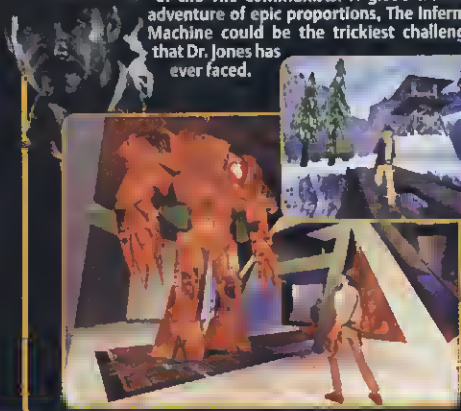
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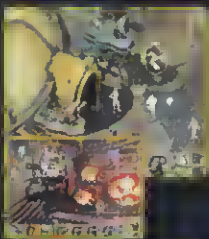
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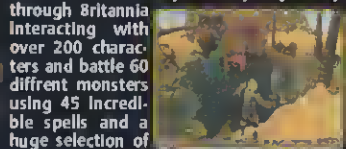
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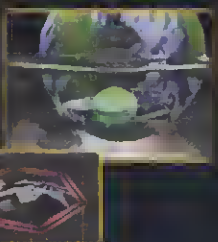


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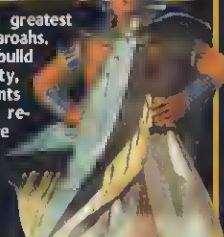


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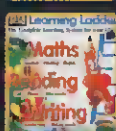
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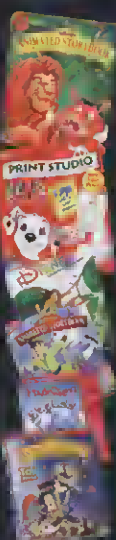
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We've got enough extra maps for *Delta Force 2*, *Age Of Empires II* and *Earth 2150* to satisfy both obsessive shooters and hardcore strategists

★ Words Tony Lamb

TRY IT YOURSELF



On this month's cover CD, we've got all the official patches, bug fixes, utilities and map editors we could find, including all the ones mentioned in these pages. To track them down, use the CD browser to go to the Patches section. All the patches are listed with a brief description and any relevant documentation. Make sure you read any associated README files for information on how to install individual patches. For further help, turn to our CD pages, starting on page 141.

This month's CD is stuffed with a veritable smorgasbord of extra maps for *Delta Force 2*, *Age Of Empires II* and *Earth 2150*. Courtesy of PC ZONE, first-person shooter fans can continue to get their adrenaline lust satisfied with some instant gratification killing, while strategy lovers can while away some extra hours mustering armies, building bases and being altogether more cerebral about enjoying their gaming fix. Egomaniacs can now play god either through their sniper scopes or by sending whole armies to their doom. Whoever said power corrupts?

DELTA FORCE 2

Novalogic's enjoyable incarnation of the gung-ho US special forces team has proven enduringly popular, despite not having the lush accelerated 3D wizardry of some other FPS games. It needs a hefty PC to run at a decent resolution and the chunky graphics take some getting used to, but for creeping around to avoid getting your arse shot off, it's tops. If you give away your position and make yourself a target in this game, you are more than likely to wind up dead. Period.

To try out these maps, just unzip them into your *Delta Force 2* directory. Then choose one from your mission list and enjoy.

★ANDY1

Filename: andy1.zip

Size: 5Kb

Rating: ★★

A single-player hostage rescue map with an airfield, SAM's, tanks and personnel carriers to shoot up on the way. Relatively straightforward, but it's a real shame you can't blow up the plane. Watch out for the Soviet HIND helicopter gunship and wandering enemies between objectives, otherwise you might get caught napping.



Ⓜ MIG29 the only thing you can't blow up on this map.

★Cmbt-DDay

Filename: cmbt_dday.zip

Size: 13Kb

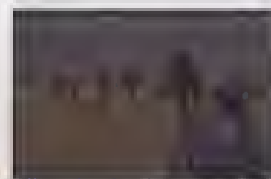
Rating: ★★

Single-player mayhem aplenty on Omaha Beach, Normandy, 6 June 1944. You're facing beach



Blow up the general's car because he won't need it.

obstacles, artillery, bunkers and machine gun nests – a thoroughly unhealthy prospect – and your fellow marines are falling like flies under the withering enemy fire. Keep moving so the enemy can't zero in on you and you might just survive – but the odds aren't good. The objective for this map is to actually get off the beach and kill all the enemy soldiers, but in the face of this amount of opposition, it's hellishly difficult. A frustrating map, but full of atmosphere. Just listen out for all the ricochets – it's *Saving Private Ryan* all over again.



Ⓜ Fellow marines compete to see who can get shot first.

★Columbia-01

Filename: co1.zip

Size: 6Kb

Rating: ★★

A simple single-player map to secure an airfield. It's hardly difficult, but make sure you listen out for voice warnings or you'll catch a bullet. Avoid enemy soldiers lurking in stairwells and make sure you jump on the helicopter quickly at the start, or you'll have a long run to catch up.

★Columbia-02

Filename: co2.zip

Size: 6Kb

Rating: ★★

A follow up to Columbia-01 and a

bit more involved. Parachute in to destroy a convoy transporting drugs and then move on to the drug baron's hillside hacienda. The usual exciting mix of long-range sniping to take out the guards before moving in with satchel charges.

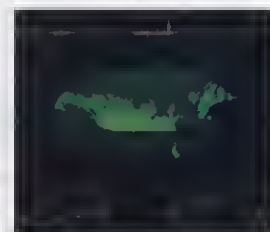
★Columbia-03

Filename: columbia-03.zip

Size: 7Kb

Rating: ★★

The third in the series and more of a challenge due to its night-time setting. You'll find yourself equipped with a re-breather unit and have to swim in along the river to where the drug cartel are holding several government agents hostage. Rescue the good guys and get them out to the extraction point. Watch out for extra guards hiding in the prison.



Ⓜ Night vision makes enemy identification difficult.

★Columbia-04

Filename: columbia-04.zip

Size: 174Kb

Rating: ★★

After the success of your previous missions, the drug traffickers are on the run and the general in charge, like every corrupt politician, is preparing to flee the



Attack in force by helicopter.

country. Your team has to attack his villa, capture him and get him to the extraction point alive. The villa is well defended, but beware of throwing grenades into upstairs windows – it you kill him, you lose.

✪ Damn Commies

Filename: *damn commies.zip*

Size: 5Kb

Rating: ⚡⚡⚡

A single-player map with a terrorist communications centre to blow up. You're meant to ride the boat all the way in, but it's incredibly difficult to move around on and there's an evil sniper up on the ridge on the far side of the base, so take an early swim and skirt around to avoid his aim. Take out the other enemy soldier hiding on 'your' hill and get to work. Use your M203 grenades to get rid of the APCs, then fight your way in, place the satchel charge and blow the place sky high.



1 Terrorist comms centre goes up in smoke.

✪ Nam 1

Filename: *nam.zip*

Size: 21Kb

Rating: ⚡⚡⚡⚡

Nam? It must be Vietnam. This single-player only map gives you some idea of what it is like to be on the receiving end of a massed NVA (North Vietnamese Army) attack. There you are in the middle of your camp just wondering where to get your next decent spliff when hordes of the little devils decide to spoil your party. Feel free to get stuck in, but remember there are a lot of them and the booby-traps outside your base will kill you if you wander off carelessly. Take cover in the

bunker and snipe at your leisure. If you're feeling naughty, take out some of your Claymore defences so that the NVA overrun your camp – then take them on in a firefight!

✪ Nam Cpn Mis 2: Payback

Filename: *nam2.zip*

Size: 24Kb

Rating: ⚡⚡⚡

A follow on from *Nam 1* which sees you taking part in a mopping-up mission to wipe out the remainder of the NVA force which attacked your base in the last instalment. This time it's their camp that gets the surprise attack. Isn't revenge sweet?

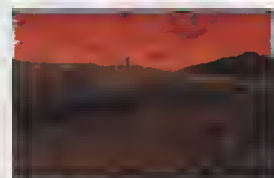
✪ Nam Cpn Mis 3 - Truckstop

Filename: *nam3.zip*

Size: 10Kb

Rating: ⚡⚡⚡⚡

The third in the *Nam* series and there is an NVA reinforcement convoy to wipe out. It's heavily armed with tanks, personnel carriers and trucks full of troops, so you'll need to be careful or you won't make it back outside of a body bag. Get in position quickly, use your M203 grenade launcher to take out the lead vehicles to stop the convoy, and then satchel-charge the tanks. Use your ammo wisely or you'll find you can't complete the mission. Do it properly, although it's so simple, you'll wonder why the gun-crazed Yanks got their butts kicked.



1 The NVA base – soon to disappear in a pile of rubble and ash.

✪ Neptune

Filename: *neptune.zip*

Size: 12Kb

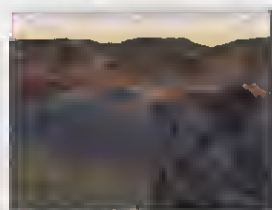
Rating: ⚡⚡⚡⚡

A great single-player map with just about every *DF2* feature in it!



Earth 2150's fantastically realistic textures and detail make it a real pleasure to play.

Jump onto your helicopter for the ride in and prepare for some demolition work. The enemy have gunboats, patrols, a pillbox and loads of soldiers, so watch out! Also, remember you don't have a re-breather with you so be very careful where you choose to swim. If you can make it to the objective (and it will be very tough), place the charges and get away to the extraction point. Job well done! This really is a fun but difficult map.



1 Enemy gunboats are only part of your worries.

✪ Reciprocity

Filename: *reciprocity.zip*

Size: 8Kb

Rating: ⚡⚡

A single-player night-time seek-and-destroy map loosely based around the Tom Clancy story *Clear And Present Danger*. Find the airfield, destroy the cargo planes and drugs, and then get the hell out of there. It sounds simple but since the scenario is at night, you can't see a blasted thing, even with the night-vision goggles on. More frustrating than fun, unless you like that sort of thing.

✪ y2k-1

Filename: *y2k-1.zip*

Size: 94Kb

Rating: ⚡⚡⚡

The helicopter will infiltrate you into a snowbound Canadian landscape. Make your way to the terrorist base and destroy it, but beware of bad guys hiding in the tents – you won't see them until they open fire. A couple of 203 grenades usually gives them something to think about, but this is not at all easy since you never seem to get them all.



1 This seems to happen every time on this map.

✪ y2k-2

Filename: *y2k-2.zip*

Size: 43Kb

Rating: ⚡⚡⚡⚡

The same terrorist mob as in *Y2k-1* have now set up shop in the middle of the desert. You've been given a Barrett sniper rifle, a candy bar and instructions to go in and deal with them. Remember that the desert is big and open, so make sure you remain under cover as much as possible because there are a lot of terrorists and they aren't bad shots either. Take your time and you'll do the job, but you ought to consider changing the Barrett for something more user-friendly. The M16/M203 sub-machine gun/grenade launcher combo works well here and you'll need its rate of fire near the objective.



1 Towers give enemy troops a panoramic view.

AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE AGE OF KINGS

Storming into the exalted company of games that can boast a *PC ZONE* Classic rating, *Age Of Empires II* showed that, although some gamers might be put off by having already played its predecessor to death, those who made the effort to delve behind *AOE1*'s familiar cuddly facade would find an even more intense strategy game worthy of many hours of their time.

Installation is a piece of cake – just unzip the files into your *AOEII* directory, strap on your firkin, girdle your loins, and off you go.

On the disk this month are:

Filename: *omaha1247.zip*

Size: 523Kb

Filename: *peasantrevolt.zip*

Size: 95Kb

Filename: *relicsofkor.zip*

Size: 32Kb

Filename: *Tibet - part1.zip*

Size: 81Kb

EARTH 2150

Only a few months ago, our review of Mattel Interactive's fantastic real-time strategy game showed us an imaginary world of true quality. The landscape is superb – gone is the horrible blurry concoction of textures that seems to blight so many games of this type – and it looks so realistic that you almost want to go out and mow the grass. The interface is user-friendly and the whole environment shows a host of clever features that take the frustration out of getting to grips with the game. *Earth 2150* needs a high-powered PC to run on, but rewards its fans with spatefuls of excitement every time.

With such a feast of exciting graphics and fantastic gameplay just begging to be exploited, it didn't take long for game fans to start churning out maps of their own – and we've got no less than five of them on the cover CD. Installation is simple – just unzip them into your *Earth 2150* directory and then select the one you want to play from the mission list.

On the disk this month are:

Filename: *Stalingradv1.zip*

Size: 48Kb

Filename: *Africav1.zip*

Size: 68Kb

Filename: *Mountainrevengev1.zip*

Size: 53Kb

Filename: *Snowfortressv1.zip*

Size: 68Kb

Filename: *Kingofthehillv1.zip*

Size: 31Kb [E]

NET ADDRESSES

As more and more game developers are giving fans the opportunity to create their own custom maps, missions and even total conversions, so the mod world is rapidly hotting up. Combine this with the fact that no self-respecting PC manufacturer would dare to sell a home machine without a modem and you can imagine why game websites are disappearing under a sea of unofficial add-ons. As you can see from our selection this month, many are small enough to allow wallet-friendly downloading, and in every case we found installation to be a cinch, which is what we all want to hear. Try out these websites for maps and more to go with this month's games:

DELTA FORCE 2 www.delta-force2.com/maps/mapsearch

AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE AGE OF KINGS www.ageshq.com/resources

EARTH 2150 www.epicclass.com/Earth-2150/Maps/Maps

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THE LIONHEAD DIARIES



Peter Molyneux is well-known for his game designs, but not so much is known about the private side of his life. So in this chapter of the Lionhead Diaries the company's founder and managing director talks us through a typical day

★ **INTERVIEW BY** Steve Jackson

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...

I'm a late riser. I work student hours - most nights I'm in the office programming until well into the early hours. It's much easier to work when there are no phones ringing or people bustling about. As a result I'm hardly ever up before 11am. My housekeeper, Beryl, makes me breakfast - just coffee - before I leave for Lionhead. I have a couple of cars, an Aston Martin DB7 and a Nissan Skyline GTR. But the Skyline is my favourite: that's the one I drive to Lionhead. I had a Porsche 911 Turbo a couple of years ago but I lent it to a friend who crashed it - twice. I took that as an omen and sold it. At least I thought I'd sold it. But the garage got the cars mixed up. It turned out I'd agreed to sell someone else's Porsche by mistake. But that's another story.

"On a typical day I get into Lionhead around lunchtime. I know this is sometimes infuriating for people like Cathy [Peter's PR agent] because I'm never available for morning meetings. But I'm just not a morning person.

"The day at Lionhead is frantic, particularly at the moment as we're going alpha. EA has a checklist of more than 4,000 features and they need to be sure they're all working. This is a terrifying prospect. But when we handed our first alpha version to them, their initial comment was that it was the best beta they'd ever had!

"The afternoon is made up of meetings, meetings, meetings. Design meetings, contract meetings, PR meetings, board meetings, interviews, people wanting to sell us things, float us on the stock market. You can see why I work nights!

"What do I do in the evenings? Work, mainly. But I'll take a break for playing games instead of making them. Tonight is Games Night and I wouldn't miss it for anything. Me, Steve, Ian Livingstone (Eidos), Clive Robert (Deep Red, developers of *Risk II*) and a couple of old gaming buddies meet every couple of weeks at Ian's house in West London.

"We score up points for each game and whoever has the highest total at the end of the year wins the honour of having his name engraved on The Pagoda Cup. The last session each year is traditionally held at my place.

Working in London, the others never wanted to come out to Guildford. So one year I ordered a stretch limo to pick them up from work and deliver them home afterwards. Now they're insisting I book topless waitresses to serve dinner!

"We play German board games, like *El Grande* or *Die Siedler von Catan*. My current favourite is a French game called *Vinci*, which is a bit like *Civilisation*. We play four or five different games in an evening but always finish with a game of *The Great Dalmuti*. And then more often than not I'll stop off at the office on the way home to write some more code.

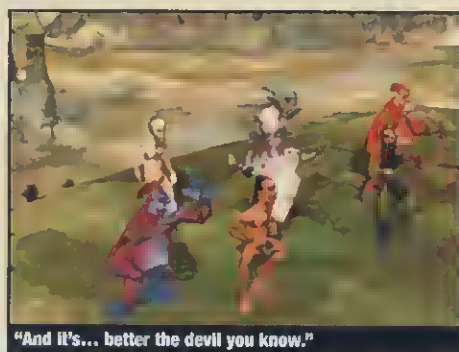
"In the evenings I get more programming done than at any other time. I slip on the headphones - *Euphoria 4* is a current favourite CD - and I'm in my own little world; just me and my villagers [Peter is responsible for coding the villagers behaviours].

"I try to keep fit in the gym, but not as often as I should. At lunchtimes me and Andy Robson (Lionhead's head of testing) often play squash at the University's courts down the road. In this line of work it's essential to keep active. It's so easy to sit at a PC all day and night and simply put on weight. You have to force yourself to take active breaks.

"Outside of work, I'll admit to being something of a party animal, when time permits. I'm still hanging on to bachelorhood. But an eligible bachelor, I guess. I did have a long-standing girlfriend until recently. But I don't think it would be a good idea for me to start playing the field again until after *B&W* is out.

"After *B&W* is out I shall take a long-overdue holiday. I haven't had a proper holiday for two years now. I've taken winter breaks - skiing with the family or with the Games Night gang - but in the summer it seems like something always comes up and I have to cancel at the last minute or cut the trip short. I'm really looking forward to a proper break before we start working on the next project, or *B&W 2*." ☑

★ As well as being a director of developer Lionhead, Steve Jackson is co-founder of Games Workshop, author of *Fighting Fantasy* Gamebooks, and a columnist for *The Daily Telegraph*.
★ The next instalment follows in our December issue, on sale Thursday 19 October.



"And it's... better the devil you know."



"It was about that big."



What's black and white and multicoloured?

END ZONE THE WORLD ACCORDING TO... THE WORLD ACCORDING

They're the sibling geniuses behind the *Championship Manager* phenomenon, and didn't need much convincing to sit in a pub talking about it. But, funnily enough, neither did *Steve Hill*

The rise of Paul and Oliver Collyer from bedroom programmers to running their own development company has been well documented. In the ten years since they started dabbling with a football management program for their own entertainment, *Championship Manager* has become the benchmark title of its genre, has consistently broken sales records and, for many gamers, become a way of life.

Operating out of an unassuming unit in an Islington side street, the Sports Interactive office smacks of football from the moment you walk through the door. Back pages of newspapers are liberally scattered around, and Skysports.com TV watches over the proceedings like a big eye, constantly relaying news of transfer deals, which are then immediately fed into the game. Upstairs is the 'ISS room', where the only other genuinely great football game currently available is constantly played. Scattered in front of the TV are some distant pretenders to the management crown, all of them a waste of time and effort. As any right-thinking man will confirm, *Championship Manager* is the only management game worth playing. We know it. They know it. Fancy a pint?

What do your parents think?

Oliver: They think it's really cool, but I don't think they really understand particularly.

Paul: They just think it's good because we're in secure jobs, you know. At first they thought it was completely stupid, but now they're fine, particularly now that we've got houses and all that boring status quo stuff.

Oliver: My Dad sees a mention of *Championship Manager* in *The Guardian* when he gets it on a Thursday and he's happy with that. Or he sees it in the charts and sends a little chart in to show me, as if I don't know or something.

Who do you think plays it? Is it your hardcore fan who goes to matches, or is it more your armchair fan?

Paul: I'm not really sure.

Oliver: I think it's a bit of both.

Paul: Anyone with a bit of time on their hands who likes football. I think the type of people who get into it is restricted because it is quite time consuming. I don't think your average father-of-three who goes to the game is going to play it that much, or if he does he's going to be in the shit.

It's not a casual game, is it? Are you aware of the carnage you've caused? I know of at least one person who split up with his girlfriend because of *Championship Manager*.

Paul: She gave him a free transfer.

Oliver: I think it's great. We were cited in a divorce case in Portugal - that's achievement. And we had a letter from one guy who got expelled from school and was thanking us for that because it meant he could play the game some more.

Paul: It's not particularly female-friendly. I'd like to think a lot of women play it, but I'm not sure that they do. I think we've had one or two on our message board.

Is it even a game?

Paul: Well, that's it. We talk about other games and the games industry, and I don't know if it is because the games industry seems to be very graphics-related.

Oliver: The games industry is completely obsessed with 3D, isn't it? It became like that a few years ago with PlayStation and the rest.

Paul: I don't even know if we sell to gamers.

Oliver: The weird thing is the games industry or the media in the industry as a whole tends to look at the sort of geeky 'playing God' kind of games as being the mass market for games. But it's not at all. Surely it's going to be something like *Championship Manager*. It isn't just gamers, it's people who like

football, and there are plenty of them. If you look at all the people who play PC games, there'll be such an amount, but then if you look at all the people who are into football with PCs, there'll be a far bigger number.

Paul: To give you an example, if you go on to the club message boards, you're probably going to see a lot of *Championship Manager*-related stuff on there. It is a weird crossover, but a good one.

Oliver: It makes us really proud because it's like a reference point. People talk about their new signing, then look up his stats in *CM3* to see what he's really like.

Is it true that a lot of your ideas come on the way to Everton games?

Oliver: It seems to be something that's happened quite a lot, a significant amount. In the office it's obviously a different situation because all the other guys are there.



TO...

THE COLLYER BROTHERS

“We don’t want people to think of *Championship Manager* as an Eidos thing. We want the recognition”

OLIVER COLLYER, CO-CREATOR OF CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER



Paul: The real sort of Collyer summit type situations come on the way to Everton games, where we’re sort of buzzing because we’re going to the match, and we’ve got two-and-a-half hours or three hours on the train and maybe have a beer or something. And you just sort of get into the regular conversation, and then ‘Wouldn’t it be really good if...’

Are you still hands-on in the office or do you just sit back counting the money?

Paul: We’re totally hands-on. We’re the main programmers in these games, we’re not going to delegate all that stuff. Right now we don’t want to sit back and not be in control.

Oliver: At the moment I’m going through my phase that I go through every three years...

Paul: Oliver’s going through his tortured artist phase.

Is this a job for life? Do you still need to do it?

You’ve sold hundreds of thousands of copies, you must have a few quid.

Paul: We’re not secure for life at all, of course not.

Oliver: It’s weird, because it’s so incredibly popular in England and not in other countries, that’s the crux of it. We sell two thirds of our copies in the UK. I think people in this country look at the success of *Champ Man* and automatically assume that it must be replicated in every other country. Last time round we didn’t even release in Germany or Spain.

Paul: The only countries where we have the same level of popularity is Scandinavia. Perhaps it’s because England and Scandinavia are really cold, so everyone stays in.

What plans do you have beyond the PC?

Oliver: We want to take it to the new generation of consoles. The only thing that we actually need to do it is to have mass storage space, ie a hard disk. So X-

Box and PlayStation 2 are possible if they get the hard disk out and enough people take it up and buy it, which I’m sure will happen.

Paul: Also, we want to take it on to the Internet.

Oliver: A lot of people are announcing online management games, but nobody’s come up with anything half decent yet.

What do you generally think about online gaming?

Oliver: I just think the technology and the speed of the Internet and the rest of it is not really good enough at the moment.

Paul: Again, *Championship Manager* isn’t necessarily best compared with other games. The future of *Championship Manager* might be online, it doesn’t mean the future of gaming is.

Oliver: I also think that the traditional multiplayer games such as *Quake* and *Unreal* aren’t necessarily the games most people are going to play online.

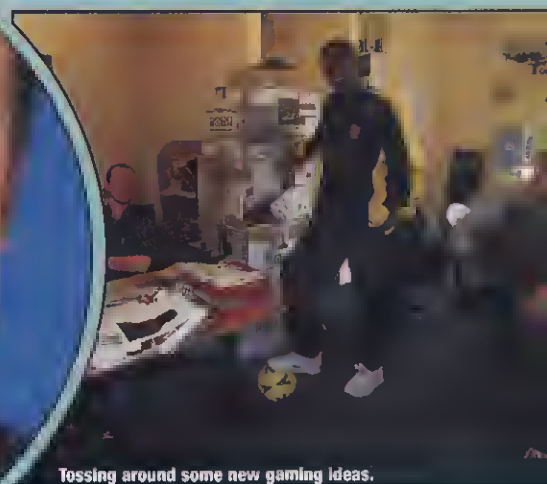
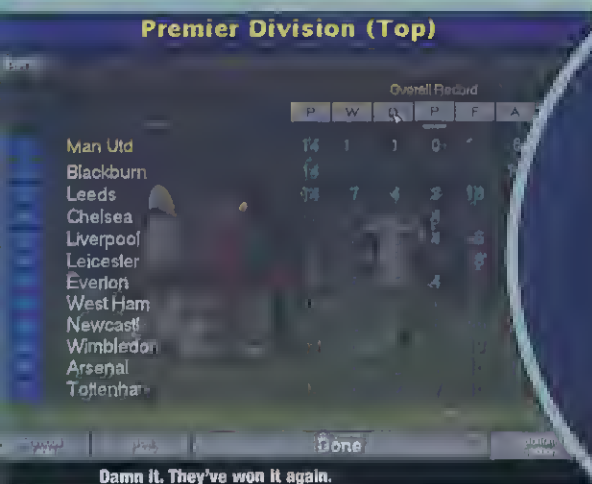


I don't think games are the new rock 'n' roll, but it's a significant part of what people do to enjoy themselves

PAUL COLLYER, CO-CREATOR OF CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER



What did you say about Everton? Watch it!



Tossing around some new gaming ideas.

← Paul: Definitely not. The trouble is you go on there and you get absolutely battered.

Oliver: And you don't ever build up any kind of rapport with the people you're fighting. The mass market don't want to get involved in that sort of shit, but they might be more inclined to get involved in something like *Championship Manager* online, where there'll be a whole community and people will be emailing transfer bids over a longer period of time. So you might find that people are more into doing it that way rather than just going into some *Quake* server and having a few blasts. That will probably be the minority.

You recently employed a PR agency to promote Sports Interactive. Why?

Oliver: Because we want people to recognise the people who make the game and not just the people who publish it. We don't want people to think of *Championship Manager* as just an Eidos thing. We've got pride in our company and we want it to have the recognition as well.

Paul: What happens if someone buys Eidos and decides they don't like football games? Say an American company. Otherwise, how is anyone going to know that we actually wrote *Championship Manager*?

Do you think the average bloke who buys it even knows what a developer is?

Oliver: Not yet, but we're hoping to, at least from *Championship Manager*'s point of view, make people aware that when they do get it that it is an SI thing. It's just stupid because when Radiohead bring out a new album, *OK Computer* or whatever, you don't think that it's made by EMI, do you?

Paul: Oh yeah, the new EMI album, yeah. But that's what it's like in the computer games industry. It's not really fair, you know.

Oliver: Developers haven't stood up for themselves. A few have – like Geoff Crammond perhaps.

But then you've got the John Romero situation, where you humiliate yourself.

Paul: That's because he hasn't done what he's said he's going to do.

Oliver: That's because he's obviously mismanaged his project in a big way, and I don't think we'd do that.

Paul: But at least everyone knows who he is.

Maybe everyone in the games industry knows who he is, but people who just stroll into a games shop once a month probably don't. You're

not on a screen, you're not in a band, you're never going to have that profile.

Paul: But the bottom line is we're not looking to be pop stars, we just want the recognition to go not just to us, but to the people who write the games. Why should people who market something take the credit for it? We just want to be acknowledged for our work. If someone says 'Who is behind *Championship Manager*?' right, it really fucks me off when people say Eidos, because they're not. All they do is market it and put it out in the shops. It's just a principle thing.

So you want to see your face on the cover of magazines?

Paul: I'm sure as a result of people like us – it won't be us – but, in ten years or so, people will find themselves high profile.

Oliver: But it's not just individuals, it's our company, our logo and stuff, seeing it associated with the game more than Eidos. I just think developers should stick up for themselves, that's all. I had a conversation with Charles Cornwall (Eidos big cheese) about three years ago when we signed the CM3 deals, and he said to me that basically Eidos wasn't about promoting Eidos, it was about promoting development studios and the games. And it's turned out to be completely the opposite.



Look, it's the living legend. Don't know who the two on the right are, though.



Smile, or you're sacked.



82				Coventry 2 Preston			
Match Overview		Match Stats		Action Zones		Match Report	
1	Magnus Hedman	8	1	1	Ian Winstanley		
37	Alan Reeves	10	2	2	Jon O'Connell		
13	Neil	8	3	3	Monty (9)		
8	Robbie Grant	8	4	4	Lee McCulloch	100%	
21	Michael Kightly	10	5	5	Karl McKenna	100%	
16	PT Taka Clement	10	6	6	Robert Roberts	100%	
16	Tonyy Curtis	10	7	7	Michael Jackson	100%	
9	George Boken	10	8	8	Paul Morgan	100%	
17	Neil Whelan	10	9	9	Kurt Hagan	100%	
17	Corrie Buckley	10	10	10	Gavin Partridge	100%	
38	Gieve Probert	10	11	11			
44	David	10	12	12			
42	Vasilios Borboulas	10	13	13			
43	Mark Atkins	10	14	14			
46		10	15	15			
50	Wayne Oulson	10	16	16			

Proof that the best teams always win.

Paul: I don't think games are the new rock 'n' roll, but I still think it's a pretty significant part of what people do to enjoy themselves. I think having a publicist will help to promote the game and possibly to get the idea of the developer across. Maybe we can find ourselves in some mainstream magazines and get people into the game who maybe wouldn't have read *PC ZONE*.

Oliver: What we definitely don't want to see is a situation where we open up a magazine and see a picture of somebody from the Eidos marketing department going up to collect an award for *Championship Manager*.

Which happened at the *PC ZONE* Awards.

Paul: Well, it won't happen again.

Oliver: We didn't know anything about it, because of the way the industry works.

It's true, you got the same bloke up three times getting some gong, photos, arm round Mark Lamarr. Who was he? Some paperpusher who will be working for another company the following year.

Paul: That basically sums it up. You've answered our question very succinctly with what you said there.

Oliver: When we say that developers deserve more recognition, it's not necessarily public recognition.

it's like within the industry as well. Why the fuck shouldn't we, after all the efforts we've made? If there's any awards that people have kindly given out, then I want to be there. Get the beers in and have a laugh.

Paul: Yeah, we want free beers. That's why we hired a PR company, we want more free beers.

Oliver: It's completely ridiculous, but that's because of the way the industry is, and the way it has developed.

Paul: I think a lot of the developers probably don't want the limelight.

Oliver: Maybe that's true, but I think publishers just see developers as ugly geeks who sit in a little room all day and just write the game, and they don't really give a shit.

Paul: It also perpetuates this geek myth as well. The other thing about having a publicist is it allows us to approach magazines or whatever with our own agenda as opposed to Eidos'. It gives us some more control, which is very important.

So what do Eidos think about this?

Oliver: Eidos do seem to be very adaptable to us, it has to be said. They've kind of realised that we are

going to do what the hell we want and ultimately they're going to get a good game out of it and make loads of money, so that's all that's really important to them. We're getting on well with Eidos, they are adapting to it and they're quite happy for us to go and get any awards that are going.

Paul: They'd just never thought of it.

Oliver: Nobody's ever questioned it. They're cool about it, they don't have a problem with it. They're not the enemy, we just need to explain it to them.

Paul: So when we did actually get to receive an award for the first time ever, we were so excited about it we managed to get monumentally drunk.

Talking of which, a skin-full at lunchtime is really beginning to take its toll, with only Paul's decision to stick to soft drinks paying dividends in the sobriety stakes (apparently he's got to build a barbecue or something later). Blinking into the sunlight of a busy London street, Oliver heads for a bit of kip, cutting an anonymous swathe through the Friday afternoon crowds that statistically must contain some *Championship Manager* fans. To be honest, it's probably best that no one recognises him or his brother, given the domestic upheaval and social ruin brought about by that godforsaken game. But, on November 8, the madness begins afresh. **PCZ**

TEAM TALK



Question: what do you do when you can't play *Counter-Strike*?

Answer: panic

★ SUFFERING FOR THE GOOD CAUSE Dave Woods

Congratulations. You've just finished reading the issue from hell. It all started when we moved offices and lost our network, and thus our beloved connection to *Counter-Strike*. After a few days without the best game in the world, we now know what cold turkey is all about and we commiserate with junkies the world over.

But then it got worse. In a scene resembling an Agatha Christie pot-boiler, the *ZONE* team was gradually reduced in size one-by-one through a combination of mystery illnesses and caravanning holidays on the South Coast. (We kid you not. And we're still waiting to see Korda's holiday snaps. Stay tuned next month when we print

a picture of him riding a donkey.) In the end it was just me and Richie, eyeing each other nervously and wondering who was going to be left – *Big Brother* style – to write and design the magazine on his own.

And then, just when things started to get back to normal, it happened. In a moment that can only go down as one of the biggest mistakes in history, we entered ourselves into the annual Dennis Publishing five-a-side football-a-thon. Imagine, if you will, real sport played by real grown men on a real concrete surface. Ten fixtures, each a massive 30 minutes of non-stop grunt and groan action. In other words, a disaster waiting to happen.

After the naming ceremony (Woods Wanderers was curiously rejected in favour of *Athletico ZONE*), we decided

on an impromptu training session/trial at Regents Park. From seven good men we had to come up with a starting five capable of holding their own against the best that Dennis can offer. It started off well. We bought ourselves the official Premiership football from Niketown and talked ourselves up,

“In the end it was just me and Richie, eyeing each other nervously and wondering who was going to be left – *Big Brother* style – to write and design the magazine on his own”

reminiscing on past glories, goals scored, matches won and trophies stacked. Then, with jumpers for goalposts and on a pitch the size of our office, the training match began and everything started falling apart.

As soon as the whistle went, resident crayon, Tim 'smug git' MacDonald, (who's still smarting at the fact that we spelt his name wrong in issue 93) immediately drifted towards the opponent's goal line and stayed there until the ball found him. He scored a couple of goals, but lashing the ball past a hapless keeper

meant that he only touched the ball when it hit him with his back was turned.

And that was the good news. The rest of the match flashed by in a blur of catastrophic goalkeeping errors, comedy Benny Hill routines, and a shared feeling of nausea so strong that not even a few cigarette breaks could convince us to carry on.

That was Thursday. The next day we realised the gravity of the situation. Tim was spotted fairy-stepping in work with a pair of busted hamstrings. I can't laugh or sneeze without getting a life-threatening pain down my sides. Steve Hill's big toenail dropped off shortly after the training session and Tricky Dickie was spotted on the day of the match leaving work with a broken thumb. Both are out of the big match.

Still, at least that cuts out any selection problems. The trouble is, we're due to play the best team in Dennis today with no subs and a second-string team. If you want to know the result just take a look at the caption on the left. My prediction? We'll butcher them. ☑



We played a team of graceless wonders and lost 9-2. Cheating is too harsh a word – unsporting is better.



“Come on Korda. Get your arse out, we know you're in there.”

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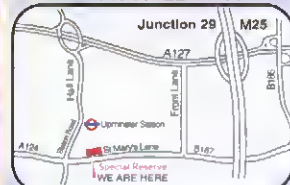
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